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HIS OWN BUSINESS

OR, FROM ERRAND BOY TO BOSS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Stolen Case.

"Joe," said Josiah Starbuck, a portly, red-faced man of middle age, proprietor of Oldport's ship chandlery and marine junk shop, situated on the water front of that ancient New England seaport, "Cap'n Bassett has bought this case. Take it up to his house."

"Yes, sir," said Joe Stanton, Mr. Starbuck's only assistant, who on the wages of an errand boy acted not only in that capacity, but as all-around assistant as well.

"Remember, no loitering on the way. You've got to pass the Common, and as it is Saturday the boys will be playing ball there. Don't stop and look at them, but go about your business. I want you to finish sorting those copper rivets and the rest of the stuff that came in this morning before dark."

"I never loiter on an errand, sir," replied Joe.

"I'm glad to hear it. Sometimes I fancy you do. Baseball seems to have an irresistible attraction for all boys and idle men. The cap'n lives on the hill about half a mile from here. You ought to go there and back in no time. It is now three by the clock; I shall expect you back twenty minutes after."

"I'll go and come as quickly as I can."

"That's right. Here's the case. Don't drop it or you are liable to scratch it, then the cap'n might send it back."

Joe took the case and started off. It was a foreign-made case, with brass corner pieces, and was rather attractive to the eye. Mr. Starbuck had picked it up from the mate of some coaster for a mere song, and had sold it to Captain Bassett for a good price. The ship chandler was always picking up curiosities and other things for a mere song, and invariably ticketed them for sale at a handsome profit. That's the way he padded out his daily receipts for his regular business. By close attention to making the mighty dollar, Mr. Starbuck had acquired a considerable bunch of money which he had invested in several sloops, a half or a third interest in each, and in sundry cottages which were never vacant of tenants. Joe Stanton was an orphan, and a distant relation of Mr. Starbuck. When his mother died three years since and left him without a home, the ship chandler sent for him to come to Oldport, put him at work in the shop, and boarded him in his apartments on the second floor, where Mrs. Starbuck held sway with a fif-

teen-year-old niece to help her. When Joe left the shop he turned into one of the leading streets and walked away from the water front.

As Joe passed the corner of the second block he noticed a couple of shabby-looking boys lounging there in the sun. He knew them both by sight, and knew nothing good of them. The taller lad was named Peters, and his father was a disreputable fisherman. The small lad Joe had heard called Glim, doubtless a twisted abbreviation of his first name. Three stores from the corner there was a new-fangled cider press in operation in the window, and Joe, in spite of his determination not to loiter, stopped to look at it. At that moment Peters approached him from the corner. As for Glim, he had disappeared. Peters lounged up beside Joe and looked at the foreign-made case which had already attracted his and Glim's attention. It was not so much the case as the grip that Joe had on the handle which interested Peters at that moment.

Peters had a piece of stick in his hand about two feet long, in the end of which was a nail, the point of which had been filed down sharp. He suddenly jabbed it against Joe's hand. With an exclamation of pain the boy dropped the case involuntarily, and looked at the slight puncture from which a drop of blood was oozing. Peters having accomplished his object, reached down, grabbed the case and started up the street on the run. Joe saw what he was about and rushed after him. They rapidly approached a vacant lot cut off from the sidewalk by a fence.

"Stop, you rascal!" cried Joe, in hot pursuit.

At that moment another boy appeared on the fence.

"Catch it, Glim!" cried Peters, tossing the case to his pal.

"Here, drop that!" shouted Joe.

Peters ran on, while Glim disappeared with his prize. As it was the case and not the capture of Peters that interested Joe, he made a spring for the top of the fence, and, with the agility of a monkey, was soon astride of it. He saw Glim and the case vanishing around the corner of a brick building facing on the street he had just passed. He jumped into the lot and darted after the young scamp. Glim, however, was a slick youth, and he could run some. When Joe reached the alley alongside the brick building, Glim was out of sight in the street.

Joe hustled through the alley and then he caught sight of Glim halfway down the block running for all he was worth. Of course, Joe kept

on after him. It would never do to lose that case. He put on a spurt and was rapidly overtaking Glim when a light wagon rattled down the next street. Glim threw the case into it, caught on behind and swung himself up. As the vehicle went on at a rapid gait Glim grinned back at his pursuer.

Joe followed the wagon, and shouted to the driver to stop, but the man paid no attention to him. In a few minutes the chase proved hopeless. The wagon turned into the street facing the harbor, and Joe was left half a block behind. When he got to the corner the vehicle was a block or more away, and going as fast as ever. Joe stared hopelessly after it, and the figure of the triumphant Glim with the stolen case in his possession.

The wagon was going in the direction of the western outskirts along the harbor of Oldport. This was where a colony of fishermen lived in small weatherbeaten cottages, on the sandy shore between the water and the rise of the cliffs in that direction. None of them was particularly prosperous, while most of them were looked upon as poor. Glim and Peters lived here, and they bore a hard name in the colony. The reputation of their fathers was equally bad. No self-respecting fisherman associated with them. It was considered a blessing that their cabins were close together, and separated from the rest of the fishing hamlet. The wagon Glim had boarded, without taking the trouble to ask the driver's permission, belonged to a large grocery house in Oldport.

The driver was taking a quantity of goods to the fishing colony. These goods were all in the original packages, and had been purchased at the wholesale price by the "mayor" of the hamlet, who was head of the co-operative store run in the interests of the fishermen to save money on living expenses. This store was merely a wooden extension erected next to the "mayor's" cottage.

Everybody in the hamlet belonged to the store, paid a small sum in dues each month, which went to the "mayor" to pay him for acting as buyer and storekeeper, and got their groceries at wholesale rates without the trouble of making individual visits to the town. Glim knew the destination of the wagon when he saw it coming along, that is why he treated himself to a free ride. He figured that the vehicle would soon outstrip his pursuer and he would easily get away with the case, which he intended to hide where it would be safe till he and his pal, Peters, disposed of it for their mutual benefit. Joe also recognized the grocery wagon and guessed where it was bound. With the grit of determination which characterized him he resolved to proceed to the fishing hamlet as fast as he could walk, as to continue running that distance was quite out of the question, and hunt Glim down, even if he had to follow the little rascal to his own door if he went there. It went against his grain to let the scamp get the better of him. Of course there was another consideration behind that—the wrath of Mr. Starbuck in case he failed to recover the case. So Joe tagged on after the wagon, keeping to the sidewalk until he reached the end of the town proper, and then plodding across the sand.

The fishing cottages were strung out haphaz-

ard for a distance of a quarter of a mile. Each was surrounded by a fence of some kind enclosing a patch of ground devoted to the cultivation of vegetables. Several well-trodden paths ran through the hamlet, and Joe followed the one nearest the cliffs, where he was least likely to attract observation from Glim if that lad was on the watch to see if he would come out there after the case. When the wagon reached the "store" at the "mayor's" house, which it did long before Joe got to the end of the Oldport waterfront street, Glim got off with the case and started for the cabin where he lived. To reach it he had to climb a rocky path to a sort of shelf on the cliff, on which were perched the two isolated habitations. Behind the Peters' cabin was a break in the cliff, and into this fissure Glim went and, clambering up among the rocks, reached the top, where he stopped beside a dead pine tree. The trunk was hollow, with an opening at the side near the bottom. Into this recess Glim dropped the case, after a cautious look around to satisfy himself that he was alone. Having disposed of the case he returned to the door of his home and sat down to await the coming of his friend Peters. Joe saw the grocer's wagon returning and he proceeded to head it off. It was driven by a young man of perhaps twenty.

"A boy, who goes by the name of Glim, jumped on your wagon with a fancy case at the corner of Washington and Prescott streets, and you brought him out here," said Joe.

"Is that so?" said the driver. "I didn't know that."

"Then you were not aware that you had a passenger behind?"

"No."

"When you stopped to deliver your goods did you see a shabby boy with a brass-tipped case in his hand?"

"I didn't notice him."

"You left your load at the co-operative store?"

"Yes."

"All right. That's all. Much obliged to you."

"You're welcome," said the young fellow, driving on.

Joe went on to the store and made inquiries about Glim, who was as well known as he was disliked by the fishing fraternity. Several persons had seen Glim with the case and had wondered where he got it. They were not surprised when Joe informed them that Peters had stolen it from him and passed it to Glim, who had brought it out there. Joe learned that Glim had gone off in the direction of his home. He also discovered that the lad's other name was Sharkey. He proceeded to the two dwellings on the shelf of the cliff, and when Glim saw him coming he made himself invisible behind a large rock. Joe had been told that the Sharkey cabin was the one on the right side of the shelf, so he went to the open door and pounded. A shabbily dressed woman of forty with a hard look came forward and asked him what he wanted.

"Are you Mrs. Sharkey?" asked Joe.

"Yes," responded the woman sharply.

"Is your son, Glim, around the house?"

"No. I haven't seen the young ruffian since he came home to his dinner. What do you want with him?"

Joe explained the theft of the brass-tipped case, and how Glim had brought it out there on the grocer's wagon.

"The case belongs to Mr. Starbuck, you say?"

"It belongs to Captain Bassett, who bought it this morning at our shop. If I report the facts to Mr. Starbuck, he'll send a policeman out here to arrest both Peters and your son."

"What was in the case?"

"Nothing."

"What is it worth?"

"Mr. Starbuck values it at \$5. It is lined with camphor wood."

"I'll speak to Glimmy about it and make him return it to your shop. I don't want no policeman comin' out here after my son. He's bad enough, the ruffian, but I don't want to see him go to jail."

"He must be around here somewhere, for he was seen coming this way with the case in his hand."

"Who told you that?" said the woman aggressively.

"A woman and two men who knew him down at the co-operative store."

"It's like them to make trouble for us up here," she said angrily.

"You'll attend to the matter, will you?" said Joe.

"Yes," said the woman sourly.

Joe bade the woman good-day, but having very little confidence in what Mrs. Sharkey was likely to do, he determined to hang around the place and see if Glim showed up. Noticing the break in the cliff, it struck him that Glim might be hiding there. He walked into the opening and mounted to the top of the rocks. There he saw Glim and Pixy Peters kneeling beside the hollow dead tree with the case which the former had just pulled out.

CHAPTER II.—The Rescue on the Cliff.

Joe dropped behind a clump of bushes and watched them. Hardly had he done so when Glim got up, ran to the edge of the cliff overlooking the shelf and glanced down. He wanted to see if Joe was still talking to his mother. He found that his pursuer was nowhere in sight. He looked down into the break of the rocks, suspicious that Joe might have seen him and Peters come that way, but the ship chandler's assistant was not there. He called Peters over. That lad put down the case and came. The two young scamps scanned the sandy shore and wondered where Joe had got to. Their backs were presented to the clump of bushes, and also to the tree where the case lay at its roots. Joe saw his chance to get possession of it. He crept around the end of the bushes, took another look at Glim and Peters, and seeing that they were still absorbed in the shore, he walked over and picked the case up. Then he retreated to the bushy screen and waited to see what would happen when the two boys found that the box had vanished. He did not have long to wait. Glim and Peters, having reached the conclusion that Joe was hiding somewhere to pounce upon them when

they came along, returned to the tree. Their eyes stuck out when they missed the box.

"What did you do with it, Pixy? Put it back in the tree?" said Glim.

"No. I left it right here," replied Peters.

The boys looked around in a startled way, but nobody was in sight upon the cliff. They could see around for quite a distance, as the ground sloped gently away from the rocky barrier. A hundred yards away, however, was a straggling wood of pines and cedars, which shut off the rolling country beyond. At the moment a coal black pony, with an unseated girl clinging desperately to its neck, came suddenly into view from around the end of the wood where a path led to the top of the cliff. It was clear to be seen that the animal had taken fright at something and, becoming unmanageable, was running wild. At the rate the pony was going it would soon reach the edge of the rocks. Unless the animal changed its course, or stopped, a tragedy was likely to take place. Joe's attention, as well as that of the two scamps, was attracted to the mad course of the pony. While Glim and Peters stood and gazed at the animal open-mouthed, Joe, realizing what was likely to happen unless something was done, jumped out of the bushes, leaving the case behind him, and rushed forward to head off the runaway. Glim and Peters heard his steps, looked around, and, taking alarm, scattered to avoid him, thinking he was trying to catch them. Joe paid no attention to them, but kept on past the dead tree. The pony's head was down, with the bitt in its teeth, and it came on wildly. Joe hadn't gone more than twenty feet before the animal was right on him. Then the pony saw a moving object in its path and swerved. At the same instant Joe sprang in the same direction and seized the bridle rein. The pony pulled him off his feet and dragged him along for several yards before the boy's weight retarded its speed. As it was, the animal, with both its fair, helpless rider and Joe, too, would have gone down over the face of the cliff but for the dead tree. Joe was flung against it with some force. He made a desperate clutch at its trunk, got a firm grip, and the pony was brought up all standing, with Joe holding the rein with only one hand. The strain on his muscles for the moment seemed to tear his arm loose from his shoulder, and the pony swung around with its hind legs almost on the edge of the rocks, below which there was a sheer fall of fifty feet to the beach. Joe gripped the trunk with his legs, reached out his left arm and, grabbing the rein with that hand, relieved the strain on his right arm. It was lucky he was able to do this, for the pony began tugging to get away. Had Joe's grip broken the animal would have backed off the cliff. But he held on for all he was worth, and speaking to the nervous animal in soft tones, gradually calmed him down, while the girl dismounted with some difficulty, as her foot was entangled in the stirrup, but she managed to disengage it.

"You have saved my life," she said to Joe, as she added her efforts to his to quiet her pony.

"I guess I have," admitted the ship chandler's boy. "If you and the horse had gone over the cliff both of you would have broken your necks."

"My parents will be deeply grateful to you, too, when they learn what you have done. What is your name?"

"Joe Stanton."

"Mine is Mabel Price."

"Your father owns the Oldport Canning House, doesn't he?"

"Yes. And your father——"

"I have none. I am an orphan, and live with Josiah Starbuck, who owns the ship chandlery store on Water street."

"I know his place. I have often looked in at his window at the strange foreign curiosities he has on exhibition. Do you work for him?"

"Yes."

"I thought your face was a bit familiar to me. I must have seen you in the store."

"That is quite likely, for I've been there for the last three years. Mr. Starbuck is a distant relation of mine."

"Indeed. It is fortunate for me that you were out here on the cliffs this afternoon."

"I was here only by accident."

He explained what brought him there, and remarked that he guessed Mr. Starbuck would read the riot act to him when he got back as he had been away so long, and he still had to return to town and execute his errand.

"It wasn't your fault that those unprincipled boys stole the case, and you had to follow them to get it back. I am sure when you tell Mr. Starbuck how you saved my life he will not find fault with you."

"I'm not worrying about what he is likely to say. I guess your pony is all right now. How came the animal to run away with you?"

"I was returning home along the road below here when a couple of ragged men rushed out from behind a tree waving sticks, and commanded me to stop."

"The rascals! Did they intend to hold you up and rob you?"

"I'm afraid that was their intention. Prince, that's my pony's name, was greatly startled and he shied so violently as to partly unseat me. Then as the men came on he made a spring, cleared the hedge and dashed in this direction. The leap over the hedge was so unexpected to me that I was thrown off the saddle and would have fallen off had I not grasped him by the neck. I was so frightened and confused that I did not know where we were going until you seized the bridle rein and partly stopped him; then I caught a glimpse of the sea, and I nearly fainted from terror when I realized how near the cliffs I was."

"Well, you're all right now."

"Yes, thanks to you, Mr. Stanton. I shall never forget the service you have rendered me as long as I live," and she flashed a bewitching look in his face. "I am sure I look almost a fright with my hair all mussed and my gown all rumples."

"Oh, you don't look bad. Roll your hair up under your hat and no one will know anything is the matter with it."

Mabel Price adopted Joe's suggestion, which she probably would have done anyway, and the boy led the pony over toward the bushes where he left the case. Glim and Peters had been interested observers at a safe distance of all that

passed. It was lucky they did not think to look around for the case, which they had forgotten in the excitement. Joe stepped into the bushes and recovered it. When Glim and Peters saw it in his hand they nearly had a fit. They had counted on making a dollar out of it, and a dollar looked big to them. Now they saw they were dished out of their prize, after the smart effort they had made in capturing it, and they were as mad as two disturbed hornets. Joe and Mabel walked toward the road together, the latter leading her pony. They continued to converse until they reached the gate that opened on Captain Bassett's grounds. There they shook hands and said good-by, Mabel starting her pony into a gallop, while Joe opened the gate and entered the garden, taking a gravel walk up to the front porch where Captain Bassett sat reading a newspaper. Joe continued on to the shop.

CHAPTER III. — What Happened That Night.

After supper Joe returned to the store and the sorting of the rivets. He completed the job at eight o'clock and the shop was closed for the night. Joe put his hat on and went out to call on his friend, Bob Flake. He remained with Bob, who lived near the Common, until a quarter of eleven, and started home. An alley from Jefferson street enabled him to reach the back of the building where the ship chandlery shop was. As he approached the end of the alley he heard voices, and he wondered who was there at that time of night talking. He stopped and listened.

"It's eleven o'clock, or close to it, Bill. I guess it'll be safe for us to begin operations on that door," said one of them. "The place has been shut up these three hours, and I don't think any little noise we make is likely to attract attention upstairs. What do you say?"

"They seem to have gone to bed upstairs, so I guess we can venture. Get out your jimmy and we'll try the door. I guess nothin' more'n a stout lock holds it. If there's a bolt we'll use the drill and saw," replied the other.

"Burglars!" breathed Joe. "They're aiming to get into our shop. Mr. Starbuck keeps money in the safe in the office, and as they appear to have tools they might be able to get into it if left alone. I wonder where the policeman who patrols this neighborhood is? He might be near by, and he might be clear up at the other end of Water street. They ought to have more police in this town. One man has to cover too much ground, and is likely to be out of reach when wanted."

He peeped around the corner of the alley and saw two dark shadows at the back door of the store. Joe knew the door was doubly bolted on the inside, but a drill and a saw would soon make an opening around each bolt after the men had located them. It would take the men perhaps half an hour to get in, and while they were at work Joe could not go up the back outside stairs and arouse Mr. Starbuck without running into the clutches of the rascals. Had there been but one man the boy would have tackled him, but

two were odds that he could not hope to overcome. Then he thought of the saloon two blocks away on Water street. The place doubtless had a telephone, and it would enable him to communicate with the police. He retreated through the alley and made tracks for the saloon. He was halfway to it when two men rushed upon him from the shelter of a doorway, and one of them knocked him senseless with the blow of a weapon. The men went through his clothes with very poor results, for Joe had little money, and seldom carried more than a quarter around with him. He had but twelve cents on this occasion.

"Only a dime and two coppers," said one of the men. "He ain't worth the trouble of knockin' out."

"He's only a boy. You can't expect a kid to have much money. Come on. We'll spend it in a couple of drinks."

"Goin' to leave him here on the sidewalk?"

"Why not? We'll drag him into the doorway."

"Better take him out on the wharf and shove him under the end of that lumber pile. Then he'll be out of the way."

Accordingly, the unconscious boy was taken out on the wharf and stowed in a nook of a pile of shingles which had been landed there from a coaster that day. In the course of an hour he regained his senses. He sat up and looked around him, but all was very dark except straight ahead of him. He recalled the attack made upon him by the two men from the doorway. They had acted so quickly that he was down and out before he could put up the least resistance.

"I guess they must have fetched me here. If their object was robbery they didn't get much from me."

He felt in his pocket and found his twelve cents gone. He was about to crawl out of the hole among the shingles when he heard voices. Two men were walking on the other side of the shingles. In a few moments their forms blotted out most of the sky view at the entrance of the hole.

"We done the trick very nicely, Bill," said one of them. "Now we must get home with the goods. To-morrow we'll sail down to Boston and sell the stuff to our friend, the junkman, who is always at home."

Joe recognized the voice as that of one of the two chaps who had started to break into Mr. Starbuck's shop. Evidently they had gone in and got away with a bunch of stuff, for they had two well-filled bags with them.

"Too bad we couldn't get at what's inside the safe," said Bill. "That's the disadvantage of not bein' up in this kind of business, and havin' the tools to work with."

"What's the use of talkin', Bill? We're not cracksmen, we're honest fishermen," said the other with a chuckle.

"We've been doin' pretty good this winter and spring for amachurs. We'd have starved, and our families, too, if we hadn't used our wits. The perlice have charged our jobs up to crooks from the outside. We ought to feel complimented, eh, Jim?"

"Sure we had, and we do. As the fishin' season is on now, we won't have to do nothin' more

of this sort till cold weather sets in ag'in, and not then if we have anythin' like luck in our regular business."

"Starbuck will be a wild man when he looks in his store to-morrer mornin' and sees that somebody has cleaned out most of his curiosities," said Bill. "We ought to get a good price for the stuff in Boston."

"We must hold out for what we think the stuff is worth. The junkman has done the right thing by us so far."

"As far as we know he has, but we didn't get no fancy figures."

"Of course not. Junkmen don't pay anythin' more'n they kin help. But this chap has treated us fairer than any one else we've gone to. Take a squint, Bill, and see if the perliceman has gone on his way."

"I don't see him," said Bill, after a look.

"Then pull our boat from under the wharf. We'll put the bags in it and be off. It's after twelve now."

Bill reached over the stringpiece for a rope, hauled on it and then jumped down into the large rowboat. Jim passed him the bags, one after the other, and got in himself. Joe crawled to the opening of the nook and looked after the men as they took to their oars and pulled away. They rowed out a hundred yards from the wharf and then turned westward. The boy was satisfied they belonged to the fishing hamlet and were taking their plunder there. The night was clear enough for him to follow the course of the boat with his eyes, and he determined to shadow it to its destination and find out the cottage or cabin they were going to. By spotting that he would be able to put the police onto the two fishermen thieves, and then their identity would come out and they would be sent to prison for their crooked work on the side. From what he had heard of the reputations of the fathers of Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters he had a suspicion that these two men would prove to be them. Nothing, however, had ever been brought against the men except drunkenness and general disreputable behavior, which had caused them and their families to be tabooed by the rest of the fishing hamlet. It is true their wives contributed to the co-operative store, and secured the benefits accruing to membership in it; but nobody objected to that, for the Sharkey and Peters families had to live, and it would have been a hardship on them to have deprived them of the advantages the rest of the colony enjoyed. Joe left the wharf and walked along Water street, keeping pace with the boat. While he could easily see the boat as it was rowed along, the men in it could not see him owing to the dark background of buildings. Besides, they were not looking for pursuit. Apparently everything was working their way. They had escaped observation from the one policeman who patrolled the waterfront and adjacent street up and down the entire width of the town. His beat was a long one, and anybody familiar with it and his customary movements could keep out of his way without much trouble. What the two fishermen-thieves didn't know about the movements of the night guardians of the peace in Oldport was

hardly worth mentioning. They knew most of the officers well, and the officers knew them, and both often stopped to talk when they met. The men pulled steadily, and as Joe walked as fast as he could he gradually drew ahead of the boat, which was his object, as he wanted to reach the fishing hamlet before they did, so he would not lose them in the shuffle. Joe reached the end of Water street and started across the sands toward the line of cliffs which practically began where the town itself ended in that direction. The rowers might have seen him now if they looked his way, but in that case they would have had no suspicion about him, thinking he was a fisherman returning late to his home. A walk of fifteen minutes brought the boy to the hamlet, and he passed along among the houses, all dark and silent at that hour. He felt so certain that the men were Sharkey and Peters that he did not stop anywhere along the route till he reached the immediate vicinity of the rocky path leading to the shelf on which the two lone cabins stood. There he hid behind a rock whence he could see where the boat landed. Ten minutes later he saw it being pulled in to the beach. The men landed, looked carefully around, pulled the bags from the boat and carried them towards the cliff. Mounting the rocks, they passed the cabins and entered the break in the cliff. But for that fact there were no houses anywhere around on the top of the cliffs, the nearest dwelling being a farmhouse half a mile distant, Joe would have thought he had made a wrong guess at the men's identity. He had looked to see the men carry their bags each into his own cabin, but when they did not, and entered the fissure in the rocks instead, he jumped to the conclusion that they were going to conceal their plunder till they were ready to take it away.

CHAPTER IV.—The Arrest of Bill Sharkey and His Pal.

Joe waited patiently for the men to reappear. He would like to have followed them into the break, but feared discovery. That would have meant trouble for himself and the loss of Mr. Starbuck's property, which he counted on recovering. Fifteen minutes elapsed, then Bill and Jim came out on the shelf again. Each was now smoking a pipe, and they stood and talked together another fifteen minutes. By that time they finished their smoke and, knocking the ashes from their pipes, one entered the Peters' cabin and the other the Sharkey cabin.

"That settles their identity for a certainty," thought Joe. "I know who they are now."

Before returning to town and calling at the station-house Joe determined to visit the break in the rocks and see if he could find where the fishermen-thieves had hidden their plunder. He waited a good quarter of an hour before venturing up on the shelf to give the men time to turn in for the rest of the night. At length he mounted the rocky path, entered the fissure and, striking a match, looked around. He hunted the hollow place all over, but the bags were not there, as far as he could see.

"Maybe they took them up on the top of the cliff and hid them in the bushes," he reflected.

He started up there and began beating the bushes. At the end of ten minutes he found the bags well hidden from observation on the outside. The first idea was to remove them. He could carry them over to the wood and leave them there in a safe place.

"If I do that there will be no use of my having these chaps arrested, as they deserve to be, for the stolen goods will not be found where they put them. They should be safe here until tomorrow, and long before that I'll have the police on the job. If those fellows are not brought up with a round turn they'll keep on stealing. There's been a number of petty thefts reported all winter, and from the little I heard of the men's conversation there seems to be no doubt that they are guilty of those jobs. The police will be glad to get real evidence that will convict the thieves. Yes, I'll not disturb the bags, but go back, awake Mr. Starbuck, tell him what has happened, and let him make the complaint, which I will back up."

With this purpose in view he returned to the shore, and started back to town. In due time he reached the shop, found it lighted up, somewhat to his surprise and, trying the street door, saw that it was not locked. He walked in and discovered Mr. Starbuck, in his shirt and trousers, talking to the policeman on the beat. The officer, while making his round, had found the street door unfastened and walked in. Looking into the little office he saw that things had been tumbled about in there and he observed that the window which had so long contained the ship chandler's stock of curiosities, had been pretty well cleaned out. A robbery had clearly been committed and he proceeded to arouse the proprietor. Mr. Starbuck came down and was paralyzed when he saw what had happened. As he set great store by his curios, many of which were quite valuable, and all represented a monetary value, he was in a great funk over his loss. The thieves had not left the least clue behind them, and their capture was a matter that only the police could be depended on to solve. At the policeman's suggestion, Mr. Starbuck made a hasty inventory of his missing property, and he was on the point of going upstairs to complete dressing himself to accompany the officer to the station-house, when Joe walked in.

His appearance was a great surprise to the ship chandler, for Mr. Starbuck supposed him to be asleep in his room, for it was now nearly two in the morning.

"Where in thunder have you been till this hour?" demanded the ship chandler, staring at his errand boy and assistant.

"Surprised to see me walk in at this time, aren't you?" replied Joe with a smile.

"Answer my question, please."

"Well, it's quite a story. I came home by the usual backway at eleven and found two men breaking into the shop by the back door," began the boy.

"You did? At eleven, you say?"

"Yes."

"I passed here and tried the door about that

time, and it was locked and nothing had been disturbed in your window," said the policeman.

"The men had probably not got in then," said Joe.

"What did you do when you saw the men breaking in? Why didn't you give the alarm? Now I've lost over \$100 worth of stuff," said Mr. Starbuck.

"No good would have come of giving an alarm. The men would have escaped, and they might have caught me and handled me roughly. I thought the best way would be to go to the saloon on Water street, down our block, and telephone the station-house."

"Did you do it? If you had, policemen would have been here hours ago if your statement of the time is correct," said Mr. Starbuck.

"I never reached the saloon."

"What prevented you?"

"Two men attacked me a few doors from the shop and laid me out."

"Confederates of the thieves, I suppose?"

"No, I don't think so. Just two rascals who wanted to see how much money I had. They got it all—twelve cents—and they carried me out on the wharf opposite and left me in a shingle pile. When I came to my senses I heard voices and saw two men with bags, and their talk showed me they were the men I had discovered trying to force our back door. They had succeeded, for they had two bags full of plunder with them."

"You saw who they were, then?" said the officer. "You'll be able to identify them when they're caught."

"Their talk indicated in a general way who they were. They put off with the bags in a rowboat, and I followed the boat along the shore till I saw it land at the end of the hamlet. The men carried their plunder up through the opening at the back of the shelf on which the cabins of Peters and Sharkey stand, and hid them in the bushes. Their intention is to take the stuff to Boston to-morrow and sell it there to some junkman."

"Well, well," said Mr. Starbuck impatiently, "do you know who the men are?"

"After hiding their plunder one went into the Peters cabin, and the other into the Sharkey cabin, from which I conclude one is Jim Peters and the other Bill Sharkey. They called each other Bill and Jim."

"I'll fix the rascals!" cried Mr. Starbuck. "I'll swear out a warrant against them at once."

The ship chandler went upstairs, completed his dressing, and then accompanied by the policeman and Joe, started for the station-house. Mr. Starbuck charged Peters and Sharkey with robbing his shop. The party then visited the house of the magistrate, woke him up and secured a warrant against the two fishermen. This was handed to the officer to carry to the station-house. The light wagon belonging to the department was hitched up and four officers went in it with Joe, Mr. Starbuck returning to his shop. On arriving at the foot of the shelf, Joe took two of the policemen on the cliff and pointed out the hiding place of the bags. They were taken down to the wagon. The officers then went to the doors of the cabins and awoke the inmates. Peters

and Sharkey were commanded to put on their clothes and come to town. When they put up a protest they were told they were under arrest. When they were brought down to the wagon and saw the bags of plunder, and Joe, whom they recognized as the ship chandler's assistant, their courage oozed away, for they felt they were in up to their necks, but they could not help wondering how they had been detected. They were driven into town, charged with their crime, and locked up. By that time Joe, who had left the wagon at the corner of Water street, was in bed and almost asleep. He felt quite elated over the good work he had accomplished and the commendation he received from Mr. Starbuck, who had recovered his serenity when he learned that his property had been recovered and was in the hands of the police. The magistrate held court on Sunday morning when any Saturday night prisoners were to be disposed of. On this particular Sunday morning there happened to be nothing on the court cards except the case of theft against Peters and Sharkey, and when they were brought into court Mr. Starbuck and Joe, with the five policemen connected with the job, were on hand to give their testimony. The first witness was the officer who made the discovery that the shop had been burglarized. He made his statements in an official way. Mr. Starbuck followed him. He told how the policeman had aroused him from his sleep, and how when he came downstairs he found his shop had been broken into and robbed of all his best curiosities. These were laid out on a table in the court-room, and he identified all of them as the stolen property. Joe then took the witness chair and his testimony was both interesting and convincing. It fastened the guilt on the accused, and as Bill Sharkey and Jim Peters listened to it they understood at last how they had been detected. The two policemen who accompanied Joe to the top of the cliff described where the two bags of plunder had been found, and that completed the case against the prisoners.

"What have you got to say?" asked the magistrate, addressing the accused.

"Nothin' except that we're not guilty," replied Sharkey. "We kin prove by our wives and families that we was home all night, consequently it couldn't have been us the young gent says he saw at the back of the ship chandlery, nor ag'in on the wharf, nor in the boat, nor at the cliffs. We always turns in 'tween nine and ten, 'cept we have visitors, and we didn't have none last night. As for our stealin' them goods, we deny it. As they wasn't found in our possession, there hain't no evidence that we ever had 'em in our hands. The cliff is open to anybody to go and come, and anybody might have hid them in the bushes. The young gent swears we was the men he saw put the bags in the boat, row it to the hamlet and take 'em to the top of the cliff. Seein' as we was in bed and sound asleep at that hour, it stands to reason he mistook somebody else for us."

Such was the defense put up by Sharkey for himself and his friend Peters, and he requested that his wife and son Glim be called as witnesses, they being in court. The magistrate called them, and they both swore that Sharkey

went to bed at ten o'clock and did not go out all evening. In his own mind he was satisfied that the men were guilty, so he held them for trial at the next term of the Circuit Court. So the two fishermen went back to jail, and their wives and sons departed for their homes greatly upset and aggressively disposed toward Joe Stanton, whom they held responsible for the trouble that had come upon them.

CHAPTER V.—The Fire.

The curiosities having been retained by the police as evidence to be used against the fishermen at their trial, Mr. Starbuck's window presented a bare look to the many people drawn to the vicinity of the shop that day when the news of the robbery of the ship chandler's place got about town. Joe was regarded as the hero of the burglary, as indeed he was, and he was the recipient of sundry compliments from those who knew him well. On Tuesday Joe received a watch and chain from Mr. Price, a set of gold sleeve buttons from Mrs. Price, and a handsome watch charm from Mabel, in recognition of his valuable service. Joe was delighted with his presents, and also pleased that the manufacturer of canned fish had not offered him money for what he had done. He paid his second visit to the Prices on the following Sunday evening, when he took occasion to thank Mr. and Mrs. Price and Mabel for their presents.

"My dear boy, they but poorly evidence the gratitude we feel towards you for saving our daughter's life," said Mr. Price. "I trust some day I may be able to express our appreciation in a more substantial way. If at any time you feel I can do you a favor, I trust you will call on me, and if it is within my power I will gladly grant it."

"Thank you, sir, I will bear your request in mind," said Joe, who did not dream how soon circumstances would induce him to avail himself of the gentleman's offer.

As he was walking through the alley that night, two boys suddenly rushed out from the direction of the rear of the ship chandlery and upset him in their haste to get away. Although he did not actually recognize them, he was sure they were Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters, and their presence there did not mean any good he was sure. He sprang up and rushed after them to try and catch one of them at least, but they had obtained too good a start, and were too spry for him to overtake either. When he returned to the alley he noticed a suspicious light around the turn, and when he came in sight of the back of the shop he saw that the shop was on fire inside. He associated this discovery with Glim and Peters, but could not understand how they could have been the cause of it until he found that the back door had been broken in. He rushed upstairs to alarm Mr. Starbuck, but he found that the ship chandler and his wife had not yet returned from a visit they were paying at the home of a friend. Then he rushed back to the shop and tried to put out the fire, but soon saw that this was beyond his efforts, so he ran out on the

street and began alarming the neighborhood. As it was Sunday night, the street was quiet and his voice reached the dwellers on the upper floors of the buildings like the clarion notes of a trumpet. Longshoremen and dock laborers generally lived in the tenements along Water street above the stores, and presently window after window was thrown up and the opening filled with one or more tenants. The fire being in the rear of the shop there was no sign of it in front, except a thin film of smoke not noticeable in the darkness.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" yelled Joe.

He was making noise enough to awaken the dead, and he certainly aroused everybody on that block. Men and boys came tumbling out of the side entrances, and they rushed toward Joe.

"Where's the fire?" asked the first man, a stout longshoreman.

"In our shop—the ship chandlery."

"What! Starbuck's place?"

"Yes."

The crowd rushed to the door and saw the blaze inside. Some ran to give the alarm at the nearest engine-house, others ran for buckets, and in a short time a bucket brigade was formed from the edge of the dock opposite to the door of the store, where Joe and several other volunteers received the water and threw it on the fire. Their efforts were of very little avail, for the blaze had got entirely beyond control by such feeble means. The fire blazed up on the outside of the back of the building and lighted up the alley and yards there. It was burning through into the Starbuck living apartment. The best that the bucket brigade could do was to retard its advance toward the front of the store. This became more difficult every moment as the smoke increased and drove them back. Finally they had to quit, as nobody could get within water-throwing distance of the encroaching flames.

"Your store is a goner for sure," said a man to Joe. "Is Mr. Starbuck fully insured?"

"I couldn't tell you. I suppose he is. At any rate, I hope so," replied Joe.

At that juncture the deep-toned fire-bell pealed out its alarm, and a fire-engine came rattling down the street, followed by a hose carriage. There were no hydrants on Water street. They were unnecessary, for the engines could pump all the water they wanted out of the harbor. By the time the first engine arrived and took up its position the whole shop was ablaze from end to end, and smoke was pouring out of the second floor. There was no other floor, for the ship chandlery establishment was in one of the oldest buildings on the street. House and ground were owned by Mr. Starbuck, and had been owned by him ever since he acquired the business from his father, over twenty years since. The entire back of the building was in flames, and the neighborhood was lit up by the blaze. Intense excitement prevailed, particularly among the tenants in the adjoining buildings, who were hastily gathering up their belongings and carrying them down to the wharves. A second fire-engine arrived and a hose was stretched in through the alley. A hook-and-ladder came, and firemen were presently on the roof and in the front of the second

floor, where two or three firemen were overcome by the smoke and had to be carried down to the street.

"How did it happen?" somebody asked Joe.

"A couple of boys set the place on fire," said Joe.

"A couple of boys? Who were they?"

"They got away before I could catch them," said the boy, who thought it better not to throw suspicion on the sons of the two fishermen who were in prison until he told his story to the police. If Glim and Peters learned they were suspected they would make themselves scarce, and Joe's object was to catch them, though he could not actually swear that they were the ones who started the fire, though he was sure of it himself. Mr. Starbuck and his wife now arrived on the scene, and one glance was enough to tell them that they were burned out of home and business. A considerable part of the ship chandler's stock in trade being composed of iron and other metal could not be consumed, but much of it could be ruined for the purpose of sale. There was a lot of new rope of all sizes which was likely to be ruined, and there were a thousand and one articles of maritime use that would probably be destroyed. Mr. Starbuck, however, was pretty well insured in a first-class company, so his loss, when adjusted, would not be considerable. One thing pleased him now, and that was the absence of his curiosities from the window. He set great store by them, for such a collection could not be soon replaced, and they had always been a great advertisement for him. The firemen worked like beavers and managed to confine the fire to Starbuck's place, which, however, was pretty well gutted. They saved about one-third of the front of the store, but the rear and the entire upper floor were cleaned out. The report that the fire was of incendiary origin reached the ears of the chief and, following up the statement, found it came from Joe. The boy was brought before him.

"Did you say that the building was set on fire?" he asked the boy.

"I did. It was, by two boys."

"You saw them in the act?"

"I saw them running away. I was returning home through the alley when they rushed out of the yard, upset me and made their escape. Then I found our back door broken in and the rear of the store on fire."

"Do you know the boys?"

"I think I do."

"Who do you think they were?"

"Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters, the sons of the two fishermen Mr. Starbuck had arrested for burglarizing the shop. It is my opinion they set the place on fire out of revenge."

The suggestion seemed natural under the circumstances, so the chief called a policeman and sent a note by him to Police Headquarters asking for the immediate arrest of the two boys in question. The fire was finally extinguished, and then the chief began an investigation at the spot indicated by Joe. A blacked kerosene oil can was found there, and other evidences of incendiarism. That satisfied the chief that Joe's story was true. A couple of firemen were detailed to

guard the ruins, by which time most of the crowd had melted away. Mr. Starbuck took his wife and Joe to a second-class hotel, and there they passed the night, Joe wondering what would be the result of the fire.

CHAPTER VI.—His Own Business.

The full account of the conflagration was printed in the morning daily, and Mr. Price and his family learned, with regret, that Joe and his relatives had been burned out completely.

"I may now have an opportunity to do something for the boy," he remarked to his wife across the breakfast table.

"You could give him a place in the factory," suggested Mabel.

"Of course, I could do that. But Mr. Starbuck is quite likely to resume business as soon as he can do so, for he is the only ship chandler in town, and has a monopoly of the business, and his father before him, for the last sixty years, it is probable that Mr. Starbuck will want to keep him."

"I'd make him an offer, anyway," said Mrs. Price.

"I intend to. I will send for him to-day," said her husband.

After breakfast Joe and Mr. Starbuck visited the burned store. They found quite a bit of stock, which stood on the front shelves, in salable condition, but it would have to be gone over, for everything was water-soaked. The office was drenched but not burned. The place no longer smelled of tar, but of burned wood. Nothing could be done till the insurance people had looked the place over and estimated the damage. This was likely to take time. As Mr. Starbuck was well fixed financially, nothing prevented him from opening and stocking another store if he chose to do so. The maritime people expected he would do that right away, as a ship chandlery was a necessity in Oldport, and the wonder was that he never had had any opposition. Probably rivals in his line had looked the field over and figured that Starbuck was so well known that nobody would trade anywhere else. There was some ground for this conclusion, for the name of Starbuck, ship chandler, was known up and down the New England coast for over fifty years, and the coasting people would hardly trade with anybody else if they could help it. Joe hung around the ruins after Mr. Starbuck went away to see the manager of the branch office of the insurance company, and about eleven o'clock a boy came up to him and asked if his name was Joe Stanton.

"Yes," said Joe.

"Here's a note for you from Mr. Russell Price," said the youth.

"All right," replied Joe.

He opened the envelope and found a request from the manufacturer for him to call at his office. Having nothing on his hands, Joe went to the cannery located at the corner of only a block and a half away, up Jefferson street. He was shown into Mr. Price's private room.

"I'm sorry to hear your place was burned out last night, Stanton," said the gentleman as Joe seated himself.

"Yes, sir; it was quite a fire."

"I understand it was the work of two boys?"

"Yes, sir. I arrived a few minutes too late to catch them at the job. They threw me down in the alley as they rushed away, and I had a glimpse of them—enough to convince me of their identity."

"Who were they?"

"Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters, sons of the two fishermen who are in jail on the charge of robbing our store the other night."

"They are evidently a pair of young rascals, very like their fathers. Have they been arrested?"

"I don't know, but if they had it is probable the police would have been after me to identify them."

"Maybe they have run away?"

"Then they'd better stay away or they'll go to jail."

"They couldn't have realized what a serious crime they were committing. A man convicted of it would get a long sentence. Well, can I do anything for you? You can have a position in my factory if you wish to accept it."

"Thank you, sir, but I guess Mr. Starbuck will open up again shortly. He would not want me to leave him. I understand the business from the ground floor up, and I am of great assistance to him. As he brought me here when my mother died three years ago, and has treated me well, it wouldn't be fair for me to cut loose from him unless he was willing for me to go."

"That's true, but I wish I could do something for you."

"Perhaps you can some time."

"Then don't fail to call on me."

The interview lasted a while longer, then Joe went around to the station-house to find out whether Glim and Peters had been arrested. He learned that the two boys had disappeared from their homes, but that officers were out hunting for them. Several days passed and nothing was done at the burned store. An adjuster had looked the place over and Mr. Starbuck had supplied the insurance company with a schedule of his stock, as near as he could figure its condition before the fire. He learned that it might take thirty days to settle the matter, and much longer if any questions rose out of the settlement proposed by the company. Mr. Starbuck, instead of starting a new store, decided to take a vacation trip with his wife, Joe to board at his expense at the hotel till further notice. Joe hung around the burned premises and was interrogated by many persons as to when Mr. Starbuck intended to open up. Joe was unable to tell them. Finally Mr. Starbuck and his wife started on their trip. Two days afterwards Joe learned that a man from Boston was considering about opening a ship chandler's store in a vacant shop a few doors from the ruins. The person who told him said that unless Mr. Starbuck started up soon it was sure to hurt his trade, for the shipping people were in many instances greatly inconvenienced by the lack of goods they were constantly in need of. Joe was impressed by his statement, and would

have written to Mr. Starbuck if he could have reached him; but the ship chandler had not left his route, so Joe had to wait till he heard from him. He called on the insurance manager and asked him when he thought the insurance would be paid, for he believed Mr. Starbuck was holding back for a settlement. The manager could tell him nothing definite, and probably did not bother much, for he did not recognize the boy as having any particular interest in the issue. Half a dozen regular customers met Joe and asked him when Mr. Starbuck was going to reopen. The boy ventured to say very soon in order to satisfy them. Then he got a letter from Mr. Starbuck, post-marked Boston. The ship chandler said that he and Mrs. Starbuck had decided to go to St. Louis to visit her relatives, and it was probable they would not be back for a month. Mr. Starbuck said he had written to the proprietor of the hotel where Joe was stopping, telling him to board the boy till further notice at his expense. Joe was disappointed by the letter. It would probably be six weeks or two months before the new store would be opened, and if a competitor stepped into the field, as was almost certain, for a ship chandlery was a positive necessity in Oldport, Mr. Starbuck's business was certain to receive a serious setback. Joe did some serious thinking that day, with the result that he determined to call on Mr. Price and see if he could secure sufficient backing to open a store himself to save Mr. Starbuck's credit. He called at Mr. Price's house that evening and put the matter before him. The manufacturer heard his plan, and then said:

"You are thoroughly acquainted with the business, are you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why don't you start a store on your own account instead of Mr. Starbuck's. If you will do that I will lend you the necessary capital. I am interested in you, not in Mr. Starbuck."

"It wouldn't be a fair deal. My object is not to take away Mr. Starbuck's trade; but to save it for him," said Joe.

"But I don't care to back Mr. Starbuck. He has ample financial resources to back himself. He has carried on the business in this town long enough to know that the people dependent on him for marine goods cannot wait his pleasure. If he intended to continue in the business he should have started a new store and left it in your charge. Instead of doing so he has left the field open to a competitor. It would be much better for you to step into the breach than allow a stranger to do so. You will have to do it in your own name if you want me to back you."

Joe said it would suit him first rate to start his own business, but he was sure it would greatly offend Mr. Starbuck, who was paying his expenses while he was away.

"Well, you think it over and let me know your decision," said Mr. Price.

Joe spent the rest of the evening in Mabel's company, and when he returned to the hotel he considered Mr. Price's suggestion, but could not decide to adopt it. It didn't look fair to him. Still, unless something was done about opening a store, and done right away, somebody else was

sure to step into the business. Next morning he saw an advertisement in the paper to the effect that the insurance people were going to sell the goods, damaged and otherwise, of the late store at auction on a certain day, the sale to take place on the ground. When Joe went to the ruins he found two assistants of the auctioneer going over the stuff and preparing it in lots. The auctioneer turned up later and, showing Joe his schedule, asked him to fix the lowest value on the different lots. Joe spent a couple of hours doing so, and having footed up the total sum and made a note of it, he asked the auctioneer if he would dispose of the goods at private sale. The auctioneer said he would, but he must get a little more than Joe's total called for. Joe asked him to set his price, and he did so. Then he called on Mr. Price and asked for a loan of \$100 more than that amount.

"Is this for the purpose of starting the store?"

"Yes, sir, in a small way, until Mr. Starbuck gets back, so as to hold the trade."

"Then you have decided not to open under your own name?"

"Mr. Starbuck's name is a valuable trademark. If you help me open the store, perhaps I can induce Mr. Starbuck, when he returns, to give me an interest in the business equal to the sum I wish to borrow of you."

"Well, I'll lend you the money, as I don't want to disappoint you, but I had much rather help you start wholly for yourself," said the manufacturer.

He took Joe's note for the money, drew his check for the sum and handed it to him. Joe cashed the check, visited the auctioneer and bought out everything in the burned store. Then he rented the vacant store close by and hired a carpenter to put up some shelves and partition off a small space for an office. Next he arranged with a sign painter to make a sign reading: "Starbuck's Ship Chandlery," and hang it above the door. He ordered cards, bill and letter heads from a printer. The painter furnished him with a temporary announcement on a large sheet of paper to hang in the window, which read: "The Starbuck Ship Chandlery business will resume business at this store in a few days."

He wrote to certain business houses in Boston, enclosing an order for certain goods to be delivered at once, signing the letters, "Josiah Starbuck, per J. S." As Mr. Starbuck's credit was good at the merchants he dealt with there was no objection about the orders being filled. While things were getting in shape, Joe went around and notified all persons interested that the store would open up the first of the ensuing week. Joe had a young friend of his named Slater to help him out, and by Saturday night the fresh goods and the old ones, fixed up, were in the new store and the big anchor and heavy pile of chains had been transferred to the new place of business. The sign had been put in place and everything was in readiness to open up on Monday morning. Then the unexpected happened.

On returning to the lot Joe found a telegram awaiting him. Opening it he found it contained startling news. Mr. Starbuck had died in St. Louis the day after his arrival with his wife,

of acute indigestion. Joe carried the news that evening to Mr. Price. The Prices were sorry to hear of Mr. Starbuck's death, for he was an old and respected resident of the town. After a long talk with the manufacturer it was decided that Joe would be quite justified in calling the new ship chandlery his own business. He knew this would be satisfactory to Mrs. Starbuck, for he stood well in that lady's graces, and she would be glad to do everything she could to help him get along. She was well provided for herself, and had the old store not been burned out Joe was satisfied he could have made satisfactory arrangements with her to acquire the business. So when Joe opened up on Monday morning he regarded the business as his own, and was fully resolved to merit the reputation acquired by the late Mr. Starbuck.

The widow of Mr. Starbuck gave Joe the curios that Mr. Starbuck had always placed in his window, and the firms who had supplied the ship chandler with goods promised to wait for their money, so Joe had great promise for the future. But if he thought he was going to have it all his own way he was mistaken, for a ship chandler from a smaller seaport town moved to Oldport with the idea of doing better.

Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters had not been caught. Their fathers had each received a sentence of one year. One day a sailor came into the store saying he had sold Mr. Starbuck a number of curios in the past, having picked them up in various ports which his ship had stopped at, and offered Joe several curios which he said he would sell for a mere song. One of them was a papier-mache head of a fierce-looking Malay, about six inches high. Joe bought the head and several other curios. The man showed him a black pearl which he had found and stated it was a very rare jewel. He said that was not for sale, however.

CHAPTER VII.—The Brig That Went Ashore.

Joe managed to hold his own against his competitor, for he made it his business to keep everything that was likely to be called for, and his three years' experience with Mr. Starbuck gave him a line on all that was needed by the maritime community. His books showed a good profit, and his occasional report to Mr. Price showed that he was getting on all right. He regarded the Starbuck trademark as half the battle in his favor, for two-thirds of the coasting people wouldn't buy at any other store but his. They had been accustomed for years to go to "Starbuck's," and when a person is accustomed to trading at one place, and is well suited there, it's hard to entice him away. Under these circumstances Joe's rival was not pulling out as well as he had expected when he opened up. Joe had been in his own business about three months and the summer season was in full swing when an unexpected gale came on one Saturday night and converted the shore for miles around Oldport into a seething mass of foam and spray. A foreign-built brig, bound for Boston, and driven far out of her course, went ashore among the

rocks a mile to the westward of the fishing hamlet, and the only person who escaped was a swarthy man with earrings in his ears, who claimed to be the captain and owner. He gave his name as Antonio Crespi, and said the brig had sailed from Leghorn on a certain date, and was consigned to Brown & Co., of Boston. All the men of the fishing hamlet went over to the rocks to look at the brig, which was a total wreck, though the hull held together. The news of the loss of the brig was telegraphed to Brown & Co., and a representative of the firm came down and viewed her, after talking to Captain Crespi. Then the insurance men came and looked at her, and arrangements were made to save some of her cargo. Before anything could be done in this line the brig broke in two and her stern sank, while the tide made havoc with the rest of the cargo. Captain Crespi, who had appeared nervous and ill at ease up to that point, recovered his spirits and departed for Boston. The underwriters advertised the wreck to be sold as it stood. Several persons, including Joe, put in bids. The young ship chandler got the wreck. He took a sloop to the spot, with several men, early in the morning, and by sundown the sloop, with what was left of the brig on board, was moored at the wharf opposite the store. The planks were piled in front of the store and offered for sale as firewood, while the bolts, pieces of metal, rope and blocks were stowed in the store. The forward windlass was among his salvage, and he stood it under the window outside, with a price on it. Among other things brought to town by Joe were half a dozen cases, very heavy, of the brig's cargo, which he had found imbedded in the sand. He could only claim salvage on the cases, for they had formed part of the brig's cargo, as he had bought nothing but the wreck of the vessel, so he notified the underwriters. A man came down, made a note of the markings, compared them with the brig's manifest, or description of her cargo, estimated their value, paid Joe a good price, and ordered the cases shipped to Boston. Altogether, the young chandler figured that the late gale had proved quite profitable to him. Two days later, to his surprise, a man came down and told him he was wanted in Boston to testify to the finding of the cases. The men he had employed on the wreck were also wanted.

"I can't go to Boston very well, for I have my store to look after," said Joe. "What testimony am I required to give? You people got all I found and have settled with me for them."

"It is necessary you should appear with your men before the underwriters. All expenses will be paid, and you and the men will be reimbursed for your time," said the agent.

So Joe put his store in charge of Dick for the day, as he had done when he went to the wreck, rounded up his late helpers, and the whole party went to Boston. They were taken to the building where the underwriters were in session, and were closely questioned concerning the finding of the cargo. The proceedings did not take long. Their testimony, after being taken down, was typewritten and they signed it. Joe was paid \$10 for his time and the men got \$3 each. The young

ship chandler felt that he was \$10 in, but he was much mystified by the proceedings, which appeared superfluous to him. He changed his mind when he saw the Boston paper next morning. It contained a sensational story about the brig. Captain Crespi had been arrested on the double charge of working off false items on his manifest, and wrecking the vessel deliberately. The last was only an inference founded on the first. The cases Joe saved from the shore were, from the markings, supposed to contain expensive shawls, whereas on being opened they proved to be filled with old Government reports and other valueless matter. Twelve cases with these markings, all presumed to be packed with shawls, were in the cargo and specially insured in the captain's name. A high value was placed on them, and this would have been paid but that the boy found the six cases and, when opened, the exposure followed. As there would have been no profit in landing the cases at Boston, for their contents were not worth as much as the cases themselves, it seemed clear that the skipper had wrecked the brig designedly to get rid of them and collect their supposed value from the insurance company. He took his own life in his hands doing this in the gale, but it was believed he had taken special precautions in the shape of life-preservers to save himself, leaving the rest of the ship's company to shift for themselves. At his examination before the United States court he pleaded not guilty to both charges, claiming that there was a mistake in the markings. His plea was not taken seriously and he was held under heavy bail, which he couldn't furnish and was sent to jail. We may as well say here that the underwriters secured evidence enough in Leghorn to convict him, ultimately, and he got what he deserved. Altogether, Joe came out considerably ahead on this incident, enough, in fact, to square his indebtedness to Mr. Price, for the underwriters voted him a reward for saving the insurance company from a heavy loss on the twelve cases. This put the young ship chandler squarely on his feet considerably quicker than he had counted on, and naturally he felt greatly elated. He sold a number of his curiosities to the summer visitors at good prices, and the money from those belonging to Mr. Starbuck he turned over to the widow, who accepted it with some reluctance. The season was on the wane when he received an offer of \$25 for the Malay's head. A wealthy bachelor took a fancy to it and wanted it for his private den. Had the offer come earlier he would have jumped at it, but not needing the money particularly, he hesitated about selling it, though there was a profit of \$22.50 in the offer, and he knew he was hardly likely to get such a good offer again. After considering the matter, he told his customer that if he would leave his address he would let him know later on. The gentleman did so and departed for Boston. Thus Joe nearly lost the fortune he was unaware he possessed.

The shipping sheet had proved so popular with the people who received it for nothing that Joe increased its size, got more advertisements, and charged fifty cents a month to pay for sending it around. As an offset to this charge he had

neat frames made to hold it, and each subscriber was furnished with one of them. He added to the shipping news notices of daily events to take place in town and had it printed three times a week instead of twice. Dick's amateur press couldn't handle the enlarged sheet, so Joe bought a bigger one of the same make, and such additional type as Dick said he needed. He gave Dick the privilege of printing jobs himself at night, and in this way his assistant made as much or more at night as he got from Joe. Thus both boys were getting on famously, each in his own particular groove.

Six months had now elapsed since the fire and the young rascals responsible for it were still among the missing at Oldport. Joe often wondered where they had gone to, and once in a while questioned some member of the fishing hamlet on the subject, but he could get no information, for no one appeared to know anything about the whereabouts of Glim and Peters. Mabel Price and Joe had become very warm friends and every pleasant Sunday went out walking or riding together. Usually Joe hired a horse at the stable near his store and rode to the Price house after dinner, for Mabel preferred horseback riding to carriage riding, and whatever suited the young lady was all right with the young ship chandler. On the first Sunday in September Joe and Mabel rode over to the cliffs where they had made each other's acquaintance. They tied their animals in the little wood and walked the rest of the way to the rocks. After looking down at the fishing hamlet they continued their stroll to the spot where the foreign brig came ashore in the summer gale. Here the surf was beating strong on the rocks, though the weather was very fine that afternoon. Almost unconsciously they continued their walk further on, climbing the higher cliff that jutted out into the sea at this point. Turning a corner of the rocks they unexpectedly came face to face with two hard-looking men and two boys who were playing cards at a smooth stone in front of a dark, cavernous opening. The four sprang up—the men with imprecations, and the boys with surprise and dismay. Joe recognized the boys as Glim and his friend Peters. The men were strangers to him. Such company was not to the liking of either Joe or Mabel and they started to make a hurried retreat, but one of the men, with a spring, barred their escape.

"Don't be in such a hurry," said the man, roughly. "We don't often have visitors, especially a young gent and young lady like yourselves. Come, now, let's know who you are."

"We don't care to stay here," said Joe surtly, as Mabel held nervously on his arm.

"You don't, eh? What did you come for, then? We didn't invite you."

"We didn't suppose any one was here."

"You see we're here, and as this here is our private parlor you'd better stay a while and rest yourselves."

"No, we're not going to stay."

"I think you'll stay if we want you to. We're the bosses of this situation."

"How dare you interfere with our movements!" demanded Joe in a resolute tone.

The man laughed in an ugly way.

"We dare do a whole lot. You're some distance from town, and if you yelled yourselves hoarse nobody but the seagulls would hear you."

"What's your object in detaining us? You'll only get into trouble. This young lady is the daughter of one of the first men in town, and if you got him after you you'd be sorry."

"What's the young lady's name, and what's yours?"

"Our names needn't worry you," replied Joe.

"Do you know these two, Sharkey?" asked the man of Glim.

"I'll bet I do, and so does Pixey," returned the youth.

"Who are they?"

"That gal's name is Price. Her father owns the cannin' house in town. The feller is Joe Stanton. He's the chap who sent our old men to prison."

"This boy sent your old men to prison?" said the man.

"Yet. He belongs to the Starbuck ship chandlery. He's runnin' the shop now since the boss turned up his toes."

"So this is the chap you told us about—the feller you two want to get square with. What luck! You've got the chance now, and Hobson and me'll help you settle your score."

"We ain't got nothin' ag'in the gal," said Glim.

"Who said you had?"

"We can't do nothin' with her around."

"Don't worry about her. We'll hold on to her while you're putting it over the feller you owe so much to."

"Look here, my man, you're inviting trouble on yourself," said Joe. "This is very much like a hold-up, and the law makes it hot for people who indulge in that kind of recreation."

"We ain't worryin' about the law. We're our own bosses out here, and do as we please. Get a piece of line and tie up this chap. He talks a bit too gay to suit me."

Joe saw that he and Mabel were in for trouble and he decided that if anything was to be done it must be done at once, and in a decided way. With such odds against him the chances of being able to get away were very doubtful, but at least he would make the best effort he could. The other man went to find a piece of line, and the two boys stood grinning several feet away. Only the man who had done the talking stood between them and possible escape. And he was a rough and tough party who could not be easily brushed aside. It was tackle him or give in like a lamb. There was nothing of the lamb about Joe when he was driven into a corner. And now he had Mabel Price to protect, and that appealed to his chivalry. He made a bluff to sidestep the ruffian, as if his purpose was to go around him. The rascal moved to prevent this, with a sardonic grin on his face. Joe's move brought him within reach of the man and, quick as a flash, he struck out at his chin with all his force. The blow took effect, for the fellow was unprepared for such a thing, and he staggered back a couple of feet with a fierce imprecation. Giving him no time to recover, Joe followed him up with a blow under the ear, de-

livered with his left fist. Almost at the same time the young ship chandler uppercut him under the chin with his right again. The whole thing was done so quick that the fellow was thrown into confusion and, trodding on a round stone, he slipped, fell on the shelving rock and fell over down into the bushes that screened a kind of gully. The bushes parted as his body struck them and he disappeared with a cry.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Yacht Adrift.

The result had been accidental and quite unexpected on Joe's part. The best he had aimed for by his desperate attack was to secure an opening by which he and Mabel could run for it. He intended to cover the girl's retreat by fighting off the ruffian. Now the rascal was effectually disposed of—possibly killed by his fall—and the path was clear before them.

"Come, Mabel, we'll have to run like fun," he said, grabbing her by the hand.

They started off around the rocks just as Glim and Peters gave a startled yell at the fate which had overtaken the man. That brought the other fellow back on the run, but by the time he had learned what had happened, Joe and Mabel had secured a start of a hundred yards, and were going as fast as they could in the direction of the fishing hamlet. Mabel could run some, and Joe encouraged her to do her best; for he believed the other man and the two boys would give them immediate chase.

This proved right, though Glim and Peters made no effort to get ahead of the man, as they might have done, for he was no great runner; but after the evidence Joe had given of his prowess, they had no wish to run up against him by themselves. In consequence, the pursuit was not as hot as it might have been, and the fugitives managed to keep well in the lead. The chase continued for a quarter of a mile and was then abandoned. Mabel was quite exhausted when Joe eased up and told her that the danger appeared to be over.

"Dear me, what awful men they were!" she said. "And those two boys, they did look like wild ones."

"Those boys are Glim Sharkey and Pixey Peters, the ones who set Mr. Starbuck's store on fire, and for whom the police were looking for for some time. I believe they've been hiding out here ever since they disappeared from their homes," said Joe.

"My gracious! Is that possible? Now that you know where they are you can tell the police," she said.

"Now that they are aware I have discovered their hiding place they are not likely to wait around this neighborhood for the police to come after them."

"They are very bad boys. My father said they ought to be in some house of correction."

"They'll get there, or in prison, one of the two, before they are much older."

"You have no idea who the men were?"

"No. They were strangers around here. How long they have been with the boys it's hard to say."

"What do you suppose happened to the man you hit, and who fell off the rock? He gave an awful yell as he fell. Do you think he went all the way down to the shore?"

"I don't know; but if he did, the chances are he's a dead man now."

"That would be an awful fate for him."

"He invited it. I don't know what they intended to do with me, but I can safely say they'd have used me roughly, for Glim and Pixey are down on me hard. I should feel very sorry if I were the cause of the man's death, but I had to defend you, but as you would have been in the way they probably would have tied you up and gagged you to stifle your screams. That would have been outrage enough. If the man's body is found on the rocks I'll give myself up to the police, and you will be my witness that I acted to save ourselves from rough-house treatment."

"But you wouldn't be punished for that," said Mabel, looking a bit startled at the idea of Joe being under arrest for causing the death of a man.

"I don't suppose I would. Your father would see me through."

"Of course he would. I would tell just what you had to strike the man."

"I didn't push him off the rock. He slipped and fell off himself. I never expected such an ending to the scrap I started."

By this time they reached the wood, found their animals where they had left them, mounted and rode toward the town. Mr. and Mrs. Price were on the veranda when they arrived, and quite unprepared for the exciting story both had to tell.

"I must go to the station house right away," said Joe, "and start the police after those boys and the man. They probably will find the other fellow badly hurt if he was lucky enough to escape with his life."

Joe went directly to Police Headquarters and told his story.

"If you want me," he concluded, "you'll find me at Mr. Price's house until some time in the evening, and after that I'll be at my lodgings. Here is my address," and the young ship chandler wrote down the street and number of the cottage where he was boarding, for he had left the hotel when he opened up his own business.

Three officers were sent out on the cliffs and Joe returned to Mr. Price's. The police found no trace of the two boys or the men, though they discovered plenty of evidence that showed the cave in the rocks had been occupied as a house for some time past. The rocks were searched for the body of the rascal who tumbled off the cliff, but no body, nor evidences of a tragedy, were found. The conclusion reached was that the fellow had escaped with his life.

There was a shelf under the bushes where he had probably fallen, and lay stunned for a while. From there it was not hard to regain the top of the cliff. So the officers had to return and report their non-success. A reporter from the News got the facts off the police blotter, and then he called at the Price house to obtain further details. He got a graphic story from Joe, with sundry additions from Mabel.

The story duly appeared in next morning's paper and attracted considerable attention in the

town, from the fact that Miss Price was an actor in it. That day Joe had a number of visitors who were notified to look out for the two men and their boy companions, but as time passed no arrests were reported.

"Glim and Pixey have got luck in keeping out of the hands of the police," Joe said to his assistant, Dick.

"They certainly have. I don't see how they do it," returned Dick.

"They've found a new hiding place somewhere and are keeping to it. If they showed themselves, they'd surely be recognized and caught."

"But they have to eat. They can't live on wind pudding."

"I dare say they steal from the farms."

"They can't keep that up without getting caught."

"While they were hiding in that cave they managed to find grub, for they did not look starved out to me."

"I'll bet they sneaked to their homes at night and their mothers provided for them. How far is that cave from the hamlet?"

"A little over a mile."

"That wasn't far for them to go and come after dark."

"They might have a new hiding place not much farther off. I'll put the police up to your suggestion. By having the shelf watched at night the boys may be caught."

Joe was as good as his word. The police thought the idea a reasonable one, and an officer in plain clothes was detailed to go out to the cave that night and lay for the boys. This scheme was maintained for a week, and when it proved barren of results it was abandoned. There was a lighthouse on a small island half a mile outside Oldport harbor, and Joe sometimes furnished odds and ends to the head keeper. One morning the assistant keeper came ashore and called at Joe's store. He wanted several things, including a coil of small rope. Joe was out of that particular rope, but promised to get it. He sent Dick to his competitor to see if he had any. He had some, but declined to sell it to Joe except at the regular price, which would leave the boy no margin of profit. Besides, he wouldn't sell the quantity Joe wanted.

"If you want it, you've got to take all I have," said the man.

"Going out of business?" grinned Dick.

"No, I'm not going out of business!" snapped the man. "For saying that, I won't sell you a foot of the line."

"Oh, all right. I guess we can get along without it. You've sent to us several times for stuff and we've let you have it at cost to give you the chance to make something. That's what you ought to do with us. I believe in fair play."

"Bah!" ejaculated the man, who was in bad humor.

So Dick returned to the store and reported the discourteous treatment he had received at the rival store. When the lighthouse man returned, Joe told him he couldn't get the rope, but would telegraph to Boston for some to come down by express, and would fetch it off to the lighthouse as soon as he got it, which he expected would be next day. The rope came down by the eleven o'clock train. Joe measured off the quantity or-

dered and after dinner he borrowed a sailboat and started for the lighthouse. He ran alongside the landing, tied the boat and took the coil of rope to the open door of the ground floor of the tall shaft which flashed a revolving light at night. The assistant keeper met him and signed the receipt for the rope.

"If you want to see Gray," that was the head-keeper, "you'll find him up in the lantern fixing one of the prisms," said the assistant.

"I'll run up a minute," said Joe.

He followed a circular flight of iron steps up. At each floor a door marked a landing. The circular stairs ended at a door which opened into the machinery room under the lantern. An iron ladder pointed the way farther up. Joe found the head keeper busy at work. After talking to him a few minutes Joe went out on the gallery and walked around, taking in the view on all sides. Shoreward, the town lay spread out in the afternoon sunshine. The smoke from half a dozen factories was blowing inland. The harbor, or, rather, roadstead, formed an indentation in the shape of a crescent.

To the eastward it rose inward, while to the westward lay the line of cliffs, with the fishing hamlet. The rest of the landscape was nothing but sky and water. Drifting down the coast, with a slant toward the shore, was a small sloop yacht. As far as Joe could see, there was nobody on board of her. About two feet of her mainsail flapped in the wind above the boom, while the unsecured jib hung down toward the water. She looked as if she had broken loose from her mooring, and Joe called the head keeper to look at her. He agreed that she had broken adrift, and suggested that Joe put off to her in his boat and tow her into Oldport.

"You'll be entitled to salvage for picking her up. If she was allowed to keep on the way she's heading she'd fetch up on the rocks where the foreign brig went ashore."

Joe delayed till the craft got close in, then he put off and ran alongside of her. Dropping his sail and boarding her, he found the sliding cabin door half open. He looked in, expecting to find somebody asleep on one of the lockers, but the cabin was only occupied by a lot of boxes and bags that looked out of place there. She was a trim little craft, built for pleasure, and had lots of "gingerbred" ornamentation about her. The cabin was painted in white and gold, with sundry brass trimmings. A brass-mounted telescope was suspended across two brass hooks. A brass-tipped chronometer hung near the door. Under the skylight swung a brass-rimmed tray containing a decanter of liquor and eight glasses marked with a monogram. A centerboard casing obstructed the center of the cabin, and on either side of it was a long flap which, when elevated horizontally, formed a table. Everything looked ship-shape except the boxes and bags, which seemed to have been thrown in at haphazard in a hurry. Joe ventured to examine some of the boxes and found they bore shipping marks such as, "From Davis & Co., Boston," in one corner followed by the address of the firm of "Havens, True & Co., 16 North Main Street, Gloucester, Mass."

The bags were tied at their mouths with yarn. One was open, and Joe looked into it. It was

stuffed with bolts of silks in the original package, with the foreign manufacturer's label in gold. To say the truth, Joe thought the presence of this cargo on board such a craft looked queer. After seeing all he wanted of the cabin, he went on deck, worked his sailboat forward, attached a two-line to a cleat in her stern, got over into her, hoisted his mainsail and started in for the town. A flash of light from the top of the lighthouse attracted his attention to the gallery. There he saw the headkeeper watching him through a spyglass. Waving his arm, he grabbed the tiller and put his own boat on her course.

CHAPTER IX.—Joe's Competitor Goes to Wall.

Joe reached the wharf near his store in due time and secured both boats. He locked the yacht's cabin with the padlock that hung at the door and put the key in his pocket. After telling Dick about the yacht he had picked up adrift, he went to the station house and reported the matter. When he mentioned the strange cargo she carried, the officer at the desk pricked up his ears and looked interested. Joe unlocked the cabin and showed him what was inside. The moment the man saw the address on one of the boxes he slapped Joe on the back.

"Young man," he said, "you've done a good job in bringing her in here."

"Yes, I think I have. I've secured a claim against her for salvage."

"Well, I don't know anything about that. What I do know is that these are stolen goods."

"Stolen goods!" exclaimed Joe.

"We've been advised that Havens, True & Co., of Gloucester, was robbed last night of two or three thousand dollars' worth of merchandise, which is believed to have been carried away by water. The address on those boxes show they belong to that firm, which is in the dry goods business, so there's no doubt we have got hold of the stolen property. A reward of \$1,000 is offered for the capture of the thieves and the recovery of the goods, so you should be entitled to a part of the reward, at any rate. I'll take charge of the boat. Have you a telephone in your store?"

"No. You can find one at the saloon down the block."

The policeman locked the cabin and went to the saloon in question to communicate with the station house, while Joe went back to his shop, quite elated at the prospect of getting a part of the reward.

The story came out in next morning's paper, and once more Joe figured prominently in the press. A representative of Havens, True & Co. appeared about nine, and after calling on the police, and visiting the yacht, where he identified the firm's property, he visited Joe in his store. After hearing the boy's story from his own lips he told him that he would be suitably rewarded. He nor the police could conjecture how the yacht came to be adrift. Joe's own theory was that the thieves had put in at some unfrequented cove for some purpose and went ashore. While they were away the yacht, having been insecurely tied, had been pulled away by the ebbing tide.

Then she had drifted up the coast. Such an elegant little craft was not believed to have been the property of the thieves. The inference was they had stolen her from her anchorage and her owner would soon be heard from. Against him Joe had a well-founded claim for recompense by picking the boat up adrift with no one on board. Thus the young ship chandler had another reward coming to him. If the owner objected to paying him a reasonable sum, the boy could easily attach her, according to maritime law, and then he could claim the legal compensation in accordance with her appraised value.

"Things seem to be coming my way since I went into business," he told Mr. Price that evening. "My store is panning out first rate. I owe nothing but the running accounts with the Boston wholesale people in my line, and I have a balance in the savings bank. I'm doing pretty well for a boy."

"You are doing well for a man," said the manufacturer. "Of course, you have had the advantage of stepping into the good will of an established business, which has cost you nothing, but still you might have run the business in the ground if you didn't know how to handle it right."

"I can handle it all right. That side issue of mine—the Oldport Marine Register—is paying me quite a profit now. It wasn't a bad idea."

"Not at all. It was quite clever of you to think of it."

"I've got 100 regular subscribers at fifty cents a month. That pays all expenses, so what I receive from the advertisers is clear profit. Having a small printing plant in my place enables me to advertise myself in lots of ways that I couldn't afford if I had to pay a regular printer for the work. Dick Slater likes to monkey with the type and run the press. It's a fad with him, and so I have a cinch in that line."

A few days later the owner of the yacht turned up and claimed his boat. The police informed him that Joe Stanton had a claim of salvage on it. He called on Joe and the young ship chandler told him how he found the yacht drifting ashore with stolen goods on board of it, and he had towed her to the wharf where it now lay in charge of the authorities.

"How much do you think you are entitled to?" said the owner.

"According to maritime law, I am entitled to quite a sum, but I'll let you off for \$100," replied the boy.

The gentleman paid him the amount and then recovered his boat from the police. He told Joe that the yacht was stolen from her anchorage at Marblehead about a week before. Shortly afterward Joe received a check from Havens, True & Co. for \$750 in recognition of his recovery of the stolen goods. Joe's savings bank bankbook totaled the sum of \$150. His business was in a flourishing condition, and his only debts were what he owed the wholesale merchants in Boston, and that wasn't a whole lot, for he settled his accounts regularly every thirty days.

His promptness in making remittances gave him a considerable larger margin of credit than he required, and so everything went easy with him. He made some changes in his Marine Register which improved it, and none of his subscribers would have given it up now if he had

raised the price. It was about this time that Joe's competitor decided to give up in Oldport. He found he couldn't make any headway against the hustling ship chandler. A good bit of the trade Joe lost at first had come back to him, and his rival found that things were going to the bad with him.

He called around to see Joe, and offered to sell out to him. The young ship chandler went around to see his stock, and finally made him a bid on it. His bid was low and the man said he might as well give it away as to take him up.

"I admit it's low, but there is a lot of stuff in your place that I don't want, because I'm supplied for months ahead on it. It would lie around on my shelves for a year or two, some of it. If you'll let me take my pick of what I can work off in the regular course of business I'll give you a better figure on them."

"That wouldn't do at all, for then the rest of my stock would have to go to auction and would fetch very little. If you won't pay more I'll sell everything at auction and that will hurt your trade for several months."

"I can't stop you doing what you want to do with your own goods. I won't give any more than I said."

So the proposed deal was off, and in the course of a month his competitor advertised an auction sale of his stock on a certain day. The auctioneer hung out his red flag and a bunch of people gathered at the shop, among them Joe himself. He proved to be the only important bidder, and he bought only what was most salable. The stuff that he didn't care to sink money in went for a mere song, and Dick, acting in unison with himself, bought some of it in. About a third of the stuff was captured by a junk dealer, and in the end Joe's business rival found he would have done better if he had taken up with the boy's offer. Thus Starbuck's Ship Chandlery resumed its former status of the only marine establishment in town. As a matter of fact, the town could only support one in good shape.

Winter passed, and with the advent of spring Bill Sharkey and Jim Peters, having behaved themselves in prison, were released ahead of their time, and they returned to their families, looking much better than when they went away. While in prison they had learned that their sons were accused of burning down the Starbuck Ship Chandlery, and had skipped the fishing hamlet. As the fishing-season would soon begin, their return was hailed with joy by their wives, who had experienced a hard time in searching for them, with the help their neighbors had accorded them. Sharkey and Peters had it in for Joe, but they did not know how they could get square with him without getting into trouble again, and they had no wish to go back to prison for a longer term, which they would certainly get if they were convicted of a second offence.

They were disgusted to learn that Joe had succeeded as proprietor to the Starbuck establishment, and was doing fine. Two weeks after obtaining their freedom they were visited by a crook whose acquaintance they had made in prison and had grown quite thick with him. This chap proposed that Sharkey and Peters go in with him on a house-breaking job in town. The fishermen declined, on the ground that they were

being watched by the authorities, and they were sure if they made any suspicious move the fact would be noted.

"Well, what are you going to do to live?" asked the crook.

"Take up fishin' ag'in in a couple of weeks," said Peters.

"That's what you did before you got into trouble, and you told me it didn't pay more than half the time."

"We might have made it pay if we attended to business right along."

"Why didn't you?"

"Because we got disgusted at the way the world treated us and others who are down on their backs, and so we got to drinkin' more than was good for us, and lost many days' work on the fishin' ground."

"What did you do with your fish when you caught them?"

"Sold the mackerel to Price, the canning man, and other fish to the market. When the market was glutted, as it often was, we got so little for our hard labor that it made us sick."

"Then when fishing is good you get a low price, and when it's poor you don't catch enough to make much off the high price. Is that it?"

"That's it," nodded Sharkey, with a gloomy frown.

"And that's liable to happen this season, isn't it?"

"It might; but we intend to work steadily and try and make out."

"Oh, you do? What's the most you can make if you have luck?"

After some figuring the fishermen gave their opinion.

"And it will take you from now till along in the fall to do that?"

The fishermen admitted it would.

"Well, you come in with me and I'll guarantee you'll make more out of one job than you'll make working hard all season."

The fishermen shook their heads.

"You needn't tackle but one job," persisted the crook. "After we pull it off you can take up with your fishing just as you have decided to do."

"It's too risky," said Peters.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained in this world," said the crook. "The rich bugs who come down here and make a show with their families in the summer make their money, many of them, in ways that wouldn't stand in the searchlight. You see them dropping their coin around, and you feel sore against the world. You are wrong. It is the clever chaps who get ahead. You could do the same if you had the right nerve."

"Ain't you afraid of goin' back to prison yourself with a long term?" said Sharkey.

"Not at all. Every business has its risks. Suppose in your business you're caught off here in a gale, you're liable to be swamped and lose your lives. Ain't that a fact?"

The fishermen admitted that it was.

"Very good," argued the crook. "You don't take no such risk as that cracking a crib. If you know your business, it's easy. I'm an expert, and you're safe enough if you stand in with me."

The fishermen were not convinced, but to gain time they promised to consider their friend's proposition.

"Now," said Sharkey, "maybe you kin tell us how to get square with the chap who put us behind the bars, without gettin' in trouble."

The crook asked for full particulars; then he said:

"You help me, and I'll help you."

After some hesitation a bargain was struck between them and soon afterward the crook went away, saying he would see them on the following day.

CHAPTER X.—The Robbery.

On the following Sunday, Joe and Mabel went out riding, but rain coming on, they had to hurry home. Joe put his horse in the Price stable while he remained to tea and to spend the evening. Mr. Price was away on business and was not expected back for a couple of days. The rain continued all evening, and Joe was invited to spend the night. He accepted when Mabel said that, as her father being away, his presence in the house would be much appreciated.

At eleven o'clock the family retired for the night, and Joe was shown to a large back room overlooking the kitchen ell. The rain was pattering on the window when he turned in. He lay awake a while, listening to it, and then he fell asleep. Shortly afterward the rain stopped and the clouds began to clear away. Along about two in the morning three men came into the grounds of the Price property over the back fence. They approached the house, and one of them pointed at the window of the room in which Joe was at that moment sleeping.

From under the stable a short ladder was pulled and placed against the side of the kitchen. Before proceeding further, one of the men was sent out in front to take a look around. He returned and reported the street to be deserted.

"This job ought to be easy," said the voice of the crook. "Price is away in Boston, and there's nobody but women in the house—two servants, Price's wife and daughter. If they should wake up and see us we must intimidate them to keep them from screaming. Now, come on."

The speaker mounted to the roof of the kitchen and the other two followed. Joe had left his window slightly open both top and bottom, to admit air. The crook noticed the fact with satisfaction. He pushed the window up and looked in. As the room was dark he did not notice that the bed was occupied. He scrambled up and entered the room. Telling his pals to wait where they were, he walked toward the door and in doing so saw that the bed had an occupant.

A coat hanging across a chair and a pair of trousers told him that there was a man in the room. This was a surprise to him, and he stopped to consider the changed conditions. He judged that this must be a visitor. He ventured to strike a match and looked at the sleeper. He saw he was a boy, and breathed a bit easier. Boys were heavy sleepers, as a rule, he figured. He opened the door and went into the corridor where he tried the first door he came to. It was locked. So was the next one. Then he turned the handle of the door which opened into the sitting room and found no bar to his passage. He struck a match and looked around. He noted many valu-

able nicknacks and ornaments, and also a desk. It was locked, but he expected that.

He inserted a jimmy under the roll top at the point where the lock was, pressed down, and the lock broke with a sharp report. He retreated to the door and waited. Nothing happened. He did not go back, but returned to the room where Joe still slept serenely on. Leaning out of the window he told his pals to get in, but to make no noise for a boy was sleeping in the room.

"I thought you said there was nobody in the house but women?" said Sharkey.

"This chap doesn't belong here. He's a visitor. He is here by accident," said the crook.

"Suppose he wakes up?"

"We'll knock him on the head and stop him from making any trouble."

The fishermen hesitated.

"Hurry up!" said the crook impatiently. "We want to get through this job."

Sharkey scrambled in at the window and Peters came after him. The three passed into the hallway, like shadows, shutting the door after them. The crook took the key from the inside and locked it, as a precaution. Nearly an hour passed, and not a sound was heard in the house. Then the door was opened and the three men entered, each carrying a bag in his hand. They glided to the window and Peters crawled out, when his bag was handed to him. At that moment Joe suddenly woke up. What aroused him he never knew, for the men made no noise. He sat up and saw the other two get out with their bundles and disappear. The crook was the last of the bunch, and he did not take the trouble to close the window. As they vanished, the spell that held the boy broke and he sprang out of bed and ran to the window. The men were on the kitchen roof, Peters in the act of getting on the ladder.

At that moment the moon came out from behind a cloud and shone full against the house and upon the men. With an ejaculation of surprise, Joe recognized Sharkey and Peters, but the crook was a complete stranger to him. He saw that they had been in the house and their bags proved they had made a successful job of it. Joe was a boy of decision. He got into his clothes in a very few moments. When he looked out of the window again the men were going over the back fence. The short ladder remained against the side of the kitchen. Joe waited till they were out of sight, then let himself out of the window, slid down the ladder and went to the fence. The men were nearly across an unbuilt strip of ground fronting on the next street. Joe watched them and saw them turn down the street. He scrambled over the fence and followed them. He had to be cautious for the night was still and his shoes made some noise.

He noticed that the men made no noise, and concluded that they were wearing rubbers. They turned up the street leading to the outskirts. The many trees along the route enabled Joe to keep in the shadow. He walked on the outside while they traveled along on the walk. A policeman patrolled this section, but he had a long beat and Joe saw no sign of him. Gradually the town dwindled to a few scattering houses and soon the three men were traversing the road that led parallel with the shore a mile or more

away. They looked back occasionally, but did not see Joe or anybody else. They hurried as fast as they could with their bags.

On either side of the road were fields that had been ploughed for cultivation. A mile from town they branched off into one of these fields, and Joe wondered how he could avoid discovery in tagging after them. The moon shone out once in a while, and the field was quite open. He saw the men were aiming for the wood and he judged they were going in the neighborhood of the fishing hamlet. He continued on to the nearest fence that divided the field from its neighbor and, keeping that between him and the men, he kept on. By this time they had disappeared into the wood. In due course Joe reached and entered the wood at another point. On his way through he came to a deserted hut. He was passing it when he saw a dim light through the window. Suspecting the men had stopped there, he approached the shanty and cautiously peered through the window. The three men were inside and had dumped their bags of plunder out on the floor and were sorting and dividing it. Among other things was a case containing a set of valuable diamond jewels. A discussion arose over this. The fishermen wanted it divided, but the crook, who understood its value, was determined on retaining it himself.

"I'm the only one who can safely turn these diamonds into cash," he said. "I'll take them to New York and sell them for the best price I can get. Then I'll send you your shares by mail in a money order."

"That's all very well," said Sharkey, "but suppose you forget to send us our share?"

"Me forget? One pal never goes back on another," said the crook.

"My old woman says, 'out of sight, out of mind,'" said Peters.

"There ain't no such thing with me."

"You let us have the diamonds and you take the rest of the stuff," said Sharkey.

"Haven't I told you that you couldn't sell them without being detected? The detectives will be on the watch in Boston before you could get there. I wouldn't think of selling them there. I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll let you have my share of the money as security."

"That would only be \$50 apiece for us."

"Well, as I'm the head of this job, and put you on to a good thing, I ought to have the chief say," said the crook. "You'll have \$150 each, which is more money than either of you have had in a coon's age. Then you'll have a lot of valuable small stuff to be sold by and by. You needn't try to realize on them for at least six months from now."

"Ye may be suspected and our houses searched," said Peters.

"What of it? Hide all but the money here in this shanty under the floor. Money can't be identified, so you'll be safe to take that home."

"You're goin' to connect with a New York train in the mornin'?" said Sharkey.

"First thing. I'm going over to the cave now to rest till daylight. Just hide your stuff under the floor and let it stay there; then I'll be off."

"You'll surely send us our share of the diamonds?" said Peters.

"As certain as winking," replied the crook.

So the matter was adjusted. Peters and Sharkey hid their plunder, excepting the money, under the floor of the shanty, and Joe, falling back among the trees, saw the men go on to the rocks, the crook carrying his bag.

CHAPTER XI.—Conclusion.

Joe did not follow them farther. The fishermen thieves were going to their cottages, while the crook was going to the cave, which was the scene of his and Mabel's adventure weeks since. The young ship chandler knew what he was going to do. He hurried back to town and appeared at the station house. He reported the robbery of Mr. Price's house, telling his story from the moment he saw the thieves getting out at his window till he rounded them up, so to speak, at the shanty in the wood. "You say one of the men was a stranger to you, but the other two are Sharkey and Peters, recently released from prison?" said the desk officer.

"Yes, and you haven't any time to lose in order to catch the unidentified man, who is the chief rascal in the robbery, judging from what I heard him say. He has Mrs. Price's diamonds with him, and they are the most valuable part of the stolen property, as well as a bag of other stuff. You will find him at the cave on the cliffs where those two boys hid so long. You can take your time arresting the fishermen, for they are not expecting to be nabbed. They have \$150 each of stolen money in their possession. The rest of their plunder they concealed in the shanty in the wood. I will show you the spot, for I saw them hide it."

The police got busy right away. The light wagon was hitched up and half a dozen men, with Joe, drove out to a point on the road opposite the wood. Five of the party and Joe went directly to the shanty where the two bags of valuables were found under the floor. One of the officers took the bags back to the wagon while the rest proceeded with Joe to the cave, a mile and a little over farther on.

Here the crook was found asleep and was arrested, much to his surprise. His bag of plunder was found near him, but he was not searched for the diamonds; that was deferred till he reached the station house. He was handcuffed and sent to the wagon in charge of two men with Joe. The other two officers waited at the wood till their comrades returned and then marched to the cottages on the shelf where Sharkey and Peters were, in turn, aroused and handcuffed.

"I haven't done nothin'," protested Sharkey.

Peters also protested vehemently against what he called an outrage, but their hearts fell when they reached the wagon and saw their friend, the crook, in custody, and the bags of plunder in the vehicle. At the station house the men were searched. The box of diamonds was found on the crook, and the money in the pockets of the fishermen. They were locked up and Joe started to return to the Price home. It was dark on to daylight when he got in at the window of the room and, removing his clothes, went to bed to get two or three hours' sleep. There was great

excitement in the house next morning when Mrs. Price discovered that the house had been robbed during the night. Joe slept through this early excitement and was finally aroused by a servant knocking on his door at eight o'clock. In fifteen minutes he entered the sitting room and found Mabel and her mother all broke up.

"We've been robbed during the night," said Mabel, through her tears.

"Yes, I know," said Joe serenely.

"Did the servant tell you?" said the girl, wondering at the boy's lack of surprise.

"No. I knew it almost as soon as it occurred, which was around two o'clock."

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Stanton?" asked Mabel.

"Three men committed the burglary," he said.

"How do you know that?"

"I saw them leaving the house through my window. They entered that way and went through the house while I was asleep."

"You saw the thieves and didn't alarm us?"

"What good would that have done? It would only have upset you both to no purpose."

"What did you do?"

"Put on my clothes and followed them to see where they were bound."

"You did?" cried Mabel, in astonishment.

"Yes. I followed them for a couple of miles to the little wood near the cliffs."

"Is that where they went?"

"Yes. They divided their plunder there, two of the men hiding theirs under the floor; the other carried his away with him to the cave where he were held up that Sunday. This chap had, I should judge, the most valuable part—a box of diamond ornaments."

"My diamonds!" cried Mrs. Price.

Joe then told them all that happened after that, which included the arrest of the thieves and the recovery of the stolen property. He told them the identity of the fishermen burglars. It was nine o'clock when they sat down to breakfast, and before they were done a policeman called to get Mrs. Price to go to the station house to identify the stolen property. This she did, accompanied by Joe and her daughter, and she recognized the property as belonging to her, her daughter, and the house. The three men were brought before the magistrate later on, and on Joe's testimony, backed up by the stolen goods which had been taken from them, they were held for trial. A month later they were tried, convicted and got ten years each, so back to prison they went, and their wives were frantic over the sentence they got.

As if that wasn't enough, Glim and Pixey were arrested in Boston for petty thievery, and were sent to the House of Correction until they came of age. Word was sent to the Judge about the crime they were suspected of having committed in Oldport, and it was added to the record that was forwarded with them to the reformatory. In the meantime, when Mr. Price returned home he was greatly taken back by the story of the robbery at his house. He sent for Joe and heard the full story from his lips, though it had already been printed in the Morning News.

"I must give you full credit for outwitting the

burglars and saving our property," he told the young ship chandler. "You must let me present you with a fitting reward."

"No, sir, you are welcome to what I have done for you. I am getting on so well that I don't require any pecuniary evidence of your appreciation. You helped me make my start, and that is all the favor I need from you now."

Nevertheless, Joe received a very handsome present from the Prices jointly, and he did not turn it down. That summer was easier for Joe than the previous one, for his business was practically running itself. For a whole year the fantastic Malay head had stood in Joe's window untouched save when the curiosities were occasionally taken out to clean the window. It had attracted a great deal of attention, and Joe regarded it as the most taking, ugly as it was, of his window display. He decided that he would not sell it, and removed the ticket from it.

One day a bunch of summer girls came into his shop and asked him if they could examine the head at closer range. To oblige them, he took it from the window and let them look at it. They declared it was the ugliest and most sinister face they had ever seen. When they had satisfied their curiosity they went away, and Joe left the head on his glass case while he waited on a customer. As soon as he was discharged he picked up the head to return it to the window.

In some way the image slipped out of his hand and fell to the floor. It broke into a dozen fragments and a stream of real golden pearls issued from its hollow inside. Joe was amazed and stared at the ruin of the head. Then he gathered up the pearls and examined them. They were all perfect round gems. There were fifty of them, and each was worth \$1,000, as he subsequently found out. He disposed of most of them in Boston, but he kept ten, which he placed in a safe deposit box at the Oldport National Bank for safekeeping.

Joe bought the ground and the new three-story brick building which Mrs. Starbuck had erected on the site of the burned store. He moved his business back there, and so Starbuck's Ship Chandlery returned to its original number, where it had been established over fifty years since. In the back half of the second floor he established his printing outfit, which he so enlarged and improved that it could no longer be called an amateur plant. He put Dick in charge of it and took him in as partner in that branch, thus adding a new printing office to the town under the firm name of Stanton & Slater. His ship chandlery business bore his own name as proprietor in small type under the trademark of "Starbuck's Ship Chandlery."

And now having shown how Joe rose from errand boy to a successful boss of his own business, and a monopoly at that, we let the curtain fall, merely adding that soon after he came of age Joe married Mabel Price and, as a wedding present, gave her the ten golden pearls strung on a golden necklace.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BANKERS' PLOT; or, THE MYSTERIOUS BOY FROM CRIPPLE CREEK."

CURRENT NEWS

SO FAT HE CAN'T SEE MOVIES

John H. Burr of Burrville, Conn., one of the heaviest men in this region, has been forced to give up attendance at the movies because the seats in the Winsted Opera House are too small for him and he doesn't care to stand. On the occasion of his last visit to the Opera House Mr. Burr got wedged in a seat so securely that it was only by dint of great effort that he released himself.

STAGGERING CHICKENS.

The Miles Dague's chickens staggered when they should have strutted, flopped when they should have flown, and giggled when they ordinarily cackle are claims made by neighbors, who also detected the smell of alcohol.

When Federal officers, upon solicitation of neighbors, visited Dague's place, Columbus, O., they found a still and some mash.

"That isn't for making whisky," said Dague. "I've found that my hens will lay two or more eggs a day when I feed them that kind of mash." The Federal officials, however, decided that Dague should account in the Federal Court for the situation.

BEAR UNWILLING RIDER

A big bear, angered at the motor car which was coming in his direction on a cliff-walled road near Austin, Pa., the other night, rose on his hind legs and, growling his defiance to the man-made contraption which sought to shunt him from the road, refused to budge an inch. The car, driven by Barney Baker, who had as passengers his wife and four other women, collided with the big bear, and the force of the blow threw him into the air, alighting on the hood of the car.

Bruin, despite his position, was unafraid and, although taxed to keep his position, tried desperately to get into the car. His insecure foothold, however was more than he could overcome. Growling and snapping his defiance at the passengers in the car, he rode on the hood for nearly 1000 yards.

After the car had passed out of the defile, the bear's weight caused the car to tip to one side. Seeing his chance to get rid of his unwelcome visitor, Baker ran his car to the side of the road and, quickly stepping on the accelerator, jumped the car ahead quickly, dumping the big animal over an embankment.

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— OR —

THE BOY WHO BEAT THE MOONSHINERS

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

The girl looked at him in surprise, for she was unfamiliar with the cause of their mutual interest.

"That's it. You guessed that because you have heard of my purpose in coming to this part of the country."

Dan shook his head.

"No, sir. Your purpose is none of my business; I just remember hearing my dad say that he had met you once, and talked over a big deal in these lands down here, but that it never went through successfully."

Judge Barton nodded.

"I did think of a big purchase that time. But your father was unreasonable, and tried to trick me by taking a part of me and selling to a rival. No man can hoodwink me, though, and I stopped his little sneaky work right in the beginning."

"You must stop that talk before me, Judge Barton! My father does not stoop to trickery or hoodwinking. He is too honorable, and has too much to do, except now when he is just getting over the attack of the Jake Newcastle gang."

The girl looked startled this time.

"What you mean by a Jake Newcastle gang? Can it be that that nice planter owns a gang? What does he mean, father? Mr. Newcastle has been so nice with us!"

Dan snorted indignantly at this, and Zachary laughed outright at the thought of Newcastle as a "nice planter."

"Well, he is a nice desperado," declared Dan, simply, as he saw an irritated expression on the face of Judge Barton. The remarks about his own father rankled in his bosom, and he determined to make the other man smart a bit.

"You cannot talk about my business friends that way," said the judge. "Mr. Newcastle has been very charming in his hospitality to me, and as I am spending several weeks in this neighborhood with every possible attention from him, I won't permit you to throw mud at him."

Dan climbed onto his horse with a smile.

"Well, as you may remember when you stop to think it over, I did not start either this conversation nor the circumstances by which we became acquainted, I'll bid you good-day. Come on, Zachary, we are expecting a few little attentions from Mr. Jake Newcastle's band of moonshiners. Onward, so that we may meet them without delay."

The judge was surprised at this quick turn to the conversation.

He raised his hand and said:

"There, there, my boy. I did not mean to be hasty. I only want to be just. I am out here looking over the big properties, and I had been entertained by Mr. Newcastle, so that I was defending my host."

Dan looked at Zachary with a quiet wink, as he responded innocently enough:

"I suppose you are going to buy some of this big tract of timberland, that he owns?"

"Yes, the part that he bought from your father, and won through relinquishment."

Dan patted Starlight on the back affectionately, and then laughed quietly and confidently.

"Well, Judge Barton, I advise you to use your profession as lawyer before you look up a pen to sign your checks for the property. You had better get a line on the deeds. And I advise you to go very wary in your dealings with the king of the moonshiners in this country. He has a broken nose which I gave him a short time ago to-day, and his disposition is not up to scratch."

The judge glared at Dan.

"I can attend to my own affairs, and will do what buying I deem best!" he answered, churlishly.

His daughter was about to interpose, but Dan had his hat off and was starting along with Zachary.

"Don't mind me, Miss Barton. It pains me exceedingly to tell your father that I am half owner in all this property here now, and that he will never get a single square foot of any I control as long as he associates with a notorious gangster."

Then Dan left the surprised judge, who was used to a great deal of cajolery and flattery because of his position and great wealth.

"What an unusual young man!" he muttered.

"Very unusual—unusually so," echoed his daughter to herself, as she watched Dan disappear in the distance, and his guide, philosopher and friend of the gaunt frame and chin whiskers.

It was a curious meeting which was destined to change the lives of them all.

"I calc'late that ye gave him somethin' ter think about," said Zachary to Dan.

"Oh, I didn't mean to do anything except let him know where we stood, my father and I. I remember now about him; he is a very wealthy New Yorker, and he represents the biggest iron and steel company in the East. He tried to buy dad's holdings before, and only offered about a tenth of what it was worth."

"He was wise not ter sell."

"Certainly. He would sell it over again to his own company for its real value, if I am any judge. That is good business all right, and perfectly justifiable—provided he can get the property in the first place to sell. But he didn't get it from dad."

They rode along, Zachary pointing out various big trees on the land, to show how valuable it would be for timber selling and firewood work.

"See them big oaks and all that pine? My lad, them's worth a lot of money right where they stand. Ef they had a railroad within twenty miles of this property, it would jump up fifty times instead of ten!"

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

SMALL WIRELESS OUTFITS

Fifteen hundred small wireless outfits have been installed in Paris jewelry, watch and clock stores to enable the jewelers to catch the correct Greenwich Meridian time as it is sent daily at 10 o'clock by the Eiffel Tower. Formerly the exact time had to be obtained from the observatory by telephone.

The installation is simplicity itself. The outfit about nine inches in diameter, is hung on a nail in the wall. A copper wire run down to the cellar or along a water or gaspipe serves as a "ground wire," while the removal of the bulb from a nearby electric light and the insertion of a contact plug takes the place of antennae. It can be done in five minutes.

The outfit can be regulated to hear everything that is sent out from the Eiffel Tower. The correspondent listened in when the press matter was being sent out one day and the signals were clear and easily heard.

COMPRESSED AIR IN QUARRIES

Compressed air is being used, near Atlanta, Ga., in quarrying granite, and it has been found to have advantages over the more usual method when the granite rock is devoid of "joints," says Popular Mechanics Magazine. Two 3-inch holes are drilled, a short distance apart, and perpendicularly to the rock, to a depth of 8 feet. After removing the drills, a spoonful of black blasting powder is dropped to the bottom of each hole, tamped with clay, and the holes wired so that they can be electrically fired. The effect of the explosion is to start cracks in the rocks at right angles to the holes. This operation is repeated a number of times, until it is certain that the cracks radiate from the bottom of the holes to a distance of about 75 feet. Into each hole, to slightly over half its depth, there is then inserted a 1-inch pipe, and the space surrounding the pipes in the holes is filled with sand, tamped so as to seal it against air pressure. Connections are then made between the upper ends of the pipes and the quarry air compressor, which continues to pump air, at 100-pound pressure, into the holes until the block of rock above the cleavage already formed is torn from the surrounding rock.

TRAGEDY OF AN AVALANCHE

An American officer tells a moving story of sudden and swift destruction in our Northwest. It happened on a February day, when a warm sun and a Chinook wind from the Pacific was melting the snow. All along the trail, as the officer and his party wound up the mountainside, great masses of snow seemed to overhang them, and more than once the officer noticed how anxious the grizzly-haired old guide seemed to be. Only a narrow path had been cleared through the snow, and the twenty mules followed one another in single file.

Halfway up they came to four cabins occupied by miners. Three brawny men in red shirts

stood at the door of one of the cabins talking as the party filed past. Salutes were exchanged, but the officer's party had no occasion to halt.

They had gone about three hundred feet and were about to make a turn in the trail, when the leader halted to look back. The line of mules was strung out for a quarter of a mile, and on foot among them were five packers, all half-breeds.

The officer heard no signal of danger, no cry of alarm. With the swiftness of thought the snow, five hundred feet up the mountain, began to move. The width of the avalanche was about half a mile, and it moved very rapidly. There were thousands of tons of snow, hundreds of trees, hundreds of great boulders.

In a few moments it was all over, and a cloud of what seemed smoke hung over the spot. It drove off down the mountain after two or three minutes, and the officer looked for his pack train.

Not a man nor a mule had escaped. He looked for the cabins, and they, too, had disappeared. Indeed, the very trail had been swept down into the valley a mile below, and almost across it. For a space of half a mile wide there was neither tree nor shrub—not a yard of earth. The avalanche had ground its way down to the rocks.

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A SECRET SERVICE MYSTERY

By Hamilton Craige and Elliot Balestier

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HARRY E. WOLFE, 166 W. 23d St., New York

An Adventure With A Ghost

By HORACE APPLETON

When I was a lad of seventeen I was an office boy for Pinkerton's Philadelphia agency, and was wild, of course, to be sent out on a case.

Every time the captain got a new job I would slide up to him and say:

"Cap'n, you'd better let me go out on that."

He would answer with a quizzical grin:

"Not this time, Harry. Wait till the next case."

Along in December of that year there was a great rush of business at our office.

We had fifteen detectives, all old experienced hands, and they were upon the jump night and day.

We could not handle the business that was coming in, and the captain was wishing that we had some more men. I remember as well as can be, sitting in my chair by the door and the captain calling out in fun from his private office:

"I guess we'll let you take the next case, Harry."

Hardly had he said the words when the door opened and a raw old countryman entered.

He proved to be Joe Baylis, a Montgomery County justice of the peace, and he wanted the captain to send a man down with him to attend to a ghost who was cutting didos at Fort Washington. The captain told him he would send a man as soon as he had one at his disposal.

The old fellow left, and I jumped to my feet.

"Captain," I said, "send me on the case."

The captain leaned back in his chair, and looked at me hard.

"See here, Harry," he said, "suppose I were to send you, what would you do?"

I outlined a very elaborate campaign against the ghost.

He let me finish, and then said.

"You'd make a confounded ass of yourself now, wouldn't you? You'd make us the laughing-stock of the town. Now, listen. In the first place, always bear in mind there's no such thing as a ghost. If I send you to Fort Washington, go there with that idea in your head—there is no such thing as a ghost. If you see the ghost and get near enough, jump for it. Don't be afraid. It won't hurt you; just jump for it. It will turn out to be a human being—no doubt of that. Now, I'll let you go and try your hand. If you see the ghost and think you can't handle it, lie low and follow it and see who it is."

The captain gave me money, and away I went. I felt pretty brave, for it was broad daylight then, but there were times when I wished myself out of the thing.

I got to Fort Washington about three o'clock and inquired the way to the haunted house from the station agent.

I found it on a hill half a miles from the town, and looked it over with interest and apprehension.

It was an old, white, frame mansion, standing

in park-like grounds with plenty of out-houses about it. Some countryman whom I met told me that the ghost was in the habit of standing on top of the broad stone wall that skirted the roadway.

There was an outhouse so situated that anyone concealed in it could overlook the whole stretch of wall from end to end, and I made up my mind that this was the place for me to get into before the ghost made its appearance. Then I went back to the hotel, took my supper and chatted with the waiters and a few loungers about the ghost.

I learned that it first appeared about three weeks before my arrival.

A man named McTanish, an ignorant farm-hand, was the first person to encounter it.

He was coming to the town one night from the grist-mill with a sack of meal on his back, and paused for a moment in front of the old house to set the bag down on a stump and rest his shoulder. He heard a noise behind him, and, turning round, saw standing on the wall a figure he afterward said was thirteen feet high at least. He did not stop to observe the figure very carefully, though, but ran as hard as he knew how down the road.

Next day a party of men saw the ghost, and they also ran.

They said the ghost made after them breathing fire and brimstone, and acting in a peculiarly weird and unholy manner.

After that the house was avoided at night, but several strong parties of men, including the selectmen of the town, saw the ghost from a respectful distance.

It approached them in each case, and in each case they took to their heels.

About dusk I stole down to the deserted house, and it was dark when I got there.

I slid along the wall to the outhouse, crept cautiously in and shut the door again.

Hardly had I shut the door when I knew that there was some other person in that outhouse.

I felt sure there was somebody close to my elbow.

I was trembling like a leaf, but I managed to pull a match from my pocket and strike it. I held it up. It showed me a big white muffled figure not two feet away. Then the match went out.

Was I scared?

Well, now, I should say so!

There are some people who laugh at the idea of a man's hair standing on end.

They say it is a physical impossibility, but I know better.

I could feel my hair rise right up and lift my hat, and my flesh crept.

But I had no time to think.

I jumped.

I had to jump.

I shut my eyes and grabbed for the door.

I was so frightened I seemed to lose consciousness for a moment, but grabbed something and held on.

When the first shock passed I felt the ghost tugging and pulling to get away from me.

It seemed as badly frightened as I was, and its hands were soft and warm.

"Don't hurt me," it said, in a terrified voice.

I had no voice to reply with.

I was choking, but I pulled my captive out on the lawn, and looked at it in the moonlight.

The sheet that had been muffled about the figure fell to the ground—a pretty girl of fifteen was disclosed.

I was in a cold perspiration and shaking as if recovering from a shock of electricity, but when I saw that I had caught a real genuine flesh-and-blood girl, and no ghost, I began to feel better, and presently was able to talk.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Jennie Baylis."

"What! The daughter of Joe Baylis?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing this for?"

The girl began to cry.

She said she had not meant any harm.

She and her sister had played ghost just to have some fun.

Her sister was usually with her, but did not come this night, as she was too busy.

She had heard from her father that a detective was coming to catch the ghost, but thought he was not due for a day or two, and resolved to make one last appearance, and then give up the performance till things calmed down.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I'm a detective," I said.

"What are you going to do with me?"

I said she was my prisoner, and as such I must deliver her up to the authorities, and after a good deal of waiting she suggested that I had better give her up to her own father, the justice.

I agreed to do that, and, picking up the sheet, I held her arm and took her with me to her father's house, about a mile distant.

When we got to the farmhouse where Jennie lived it was half-past nine o'clock.

Everybody was in bed, and the lights were all out, but I boldly knocked at the door.

A window opened, and a man's voice said:

"Who's there?"

"The detective."

"You're rather late. Why did you not wait till to-morrow? Better come around and see me in the morning."

"I want to see you now. I have the ghost."

At this the window was closed with a bang, and I heard hurried steps on the stair.

The door opened, and old Baylis stood in the doorway.

He was draped in a very long, old-fashioned white gown, and wore a tall, steep-shaped night-cap.

One hand held up a tin candle-stick, and the other shaded the light.

He looked at me in astonishment, and when he saw his daughter and the sheet I thought he was going into convulsions.

"You, Jennie?" he asked at length.

"Yes, father," said Jennie, very humbly.

Old Baylis sighed and said "Come in."

He sent for the neighbors immediately.

I don't know what was said at their meeting,

for I was not admitted to it, but old Baylis gave me a letter to the captain and packed me off on the midnight train.

Next morning I reached the office early, and found all the men present, waiting for the captain to detail them.

The men grinned at me, and passed the time of day pleasantly enough.

They all knew where I had been, and anticipated a wonderful tale of disaster and defeat, which they were ready to laugh at, although I was a favorite with them, having done many a piece of extra work for every man there.

"I thought I sent you to Fort Washington, Harry?" said the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"Made an ass of yourself, I suppose?"

"There's a letter, sir."

While the captain read the letter the men gazed at me plentifully.

"This is a very nice letter, Harry," said the captain. "Boys, the youngster captured the ghost."

"Did he?" said the men.

"Yes, sir, he did. The boy is a credit to us," and then the captain read the letter of the selectmen out loud.

At every sentence I grew a fool.

"Well, how did you do it?" several inquired.

I told the story, and you may be sure I did not refrain from giving myself plenty of credit.

My tale was very highly colored.

When it was concluded, Long Jim Landon drawled out:

"Harry, tell the honest truth. Was you frightened when that match went out?"

"No; of course not!" said I.

But I was frightened two years later, when I asked the ghost to marry me, and thought she was going to say no. However, she didn't.

MOTHER DINOSAUR

Hope that they may obtain for the museum of the Eastern Washington Historical Society, Spokane, Wash., an almost perfect specimen of a dinosaur skeleton is expressed by officials of the society here, following the offer by Col. D. Crockett of Corvallis, Mont., of a huge skeleton which he discovered recently north of that town.

The skeleton, which was found on a hillside near the Canadian border with a portion of the immense head and forelegs protruding, is declared to be in a perfect state of preservation. Col. Crockett estimated that it would be more than 100 feet in length upon excavation. There appear to be several smaller skeletons in the vicinity, he stated.

E. A. Lindley, member of the board of directors of the museum, has replied that arrangements will be made at once for the transportation of the find, with a view to its later excavation. The museum is making plans at present for the excavation of a dinosaur skeleton recently discovered five miles south of Lewiston, Ida., by Patrick G. Gibbons, a geologist.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

NEW COUNTERFEIT 20 DOLLAR BILL

Have you a twenty dollar bill stowed away in your pocketbook? Better look at it and see if it is counterfeit, or better still, you'd better examine the next twenty you are tendered so you won't get a spurious note.

The banks have posted a warning under the caption "Very Dangerous" describing the counterfeit. It is said to be difficult of detection except on close scrutiny. The circular says it is a New York Federal Reserve note of the series A 176, with "292 BACK under 'twenty dollars,' under letter 'D'."

President Cleveland's picture is on the tint. In the counterfeit the coat is a deep black, while in the genuine distinct lines are noticeable in the garment.

HE EATS 'EM ALIVE

When conversation drifted to the subject of animals that eat flies, Abraham Bashum, of Jeannette, Pa., volunteered that he "could eat flies all right." He would prove it upon a small bet, with the understanding that he was to be paid 5 cents for each fly swallowed.

"You're on," chorused the doubters, and the hunt for flies began.

Within a few minutes every man in the pool room had a fly which he had urged upon Bashum.

"That's one," remarked the gastronomic wonder as he thrust a fluttering blue-backed one into his mouth and gulped. "A nickel, please." It was paid and another captive was pressed into his hand.

Another gulp and another nickel. This continued till Bashum had swallowed eight flies. But the ninth wound up the show. It stuck in Abe's throat. He swallowed hard and manfully, but the obstinate insect refused to budge. It was decided that Bashum had won his wager, however, and he left to get a mouthful of something to force the ninth one down his gullet.

GREEN WATER

"Green sea" on the ocean and "green water" on the Nile have two quite different meanings. The clear, unbroken wave that sweeps over the

deck has no relation to the unpleasant product of the upper part of the great river.

About April 10 the Nile begins its annual rise. A month later the effect is felt at Khartum. A most curious phenomenon accompanies this increase in the appearance of "green water."

It used to be thought that the color came from the swamps of the Upper Nile, lying isolated and stagnant under the burning-tropical sun, and polluting the waters with decaying vegetable matter. With the spring rise this fetid water was supposed to be swept into the streams to make its appearance in Egypt.

This theory was abandoned some time ago. The green water is caused by the presence of innumerable numbers of microscopic algæ, offensive to the taste and smell. They have their origin way up in the tributaries, and are carried to the Nile, where under the hot sun and in the clear water they increase with amazing rapidity, forming columns from two hundred and fifty miles to five hundred miles long.

The weeds go on growing and dying and decaying until the turbid flood waters put them to an end, for they cannot exist save in clear water.

LAUGHS

He—So you refuse me? She—Well, rather; what do you take me for? He—Oh, about thirty-five; better think it over.

Doctor—What makes you think the boy isn't normal? Mother—Everything. He was sixteen years old last June, and yet he doesn't think he knows more than his father.

The Woman—My husband is forty to-day. You'd never believe that there is actually ten years difference in our ages. The Man—Why, no, indeed. I'm sure you look every bit as young as he does.

Simpkins was always soft-hearted. This is what he wrote: "Dear Mrs. Jones—Your husband cannot come home to-day because his bathing suit was washed away. P. S.—Poor Joes was inside the suit."

The Countess—This book says that in India it is the custom to bury the living wife with her dead husband. Isn't it terrible? The Duke—Indeed it is! The poor husband! Even death brings him no release.

"Mrs. Irons, if that infernal cat of yours keeps me awake as he did last night I'll shoot him." "I wouldn't blame you a bit if you did, Colonel Stormley. Only it wasn't the cat; one of my boarders is learning to play the 'oboe.'"

Wife—Did you post that letter I gave you? Hubby—Yes, dear. I carried it in my hands so I could not forget it, and I dropped it in the first mailbox. I remember, because— Wife—There, dear, that will do. I didn't give you any letter to post.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

UNIVERSITY BUG HOUSE

A bug house has been built at Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind., but not the kind generally referred to when the expression is used. A small building, 10x12 feet, situated south of the Agriculture Experiment Station, will be used by the university in experimental work with insects. The building is inclosed with wire screening. Plant bearing insects are placed in the bug house, where observation is made of the effects on plants. The experimental work is in charge of Professor J. A. Cleveland of the entomology department.

BLINDED WILD GEESE LAND.

Feasting on wild geese was common at Berkeley Springs, W. Va., for once. A flock, while flying over town, was attracted by the lights and several of the more curious came down. One fifteen-pounder landed in front of the postoffice and was captured by Harry Newell. Another landed near the court house and was taken home by Stanley Ziler after a chase. Dr. S. Cook experienced little trouble in trapping one of the birds as it came down to roost on his front porch. Bayard Brunk captured a fourth goose near the United Brethren Church.

JAIL "COMEBACKS" WORK

Reno's new chain gang, composed of "comebacks" at the City Jail, has started functioning.

Al Pfeiffer, as special officer, is in charge of the gang and his answer to predictions that he cannot get the men to work is a system whereby a certain amount of work is allotted in a certain time, the men to be allowed to loaf if they finish inside the limit.

The result is that the men speed up their assault on weeds and debris in back streets and alleys, and then sit in the shade, roll cigarettes and discuss economic conditions.

Also, they get three squares a day instead of the two served to inmates of City Jail who do not work.

The gang will be maintained until the streets and alleys are cleaned up at least, and Chief of Police Kirkey proposes to find other "work for idle hands to do."

MAINE STRONG MAN

Vouched for by reputable citizens in Androscoggin County is the story of the Merrill Plantation man, whose strength is phenomenal. Abraham Lincoln Hardy—his name is strong enough to accomplish wonders—is fifty-five years old, stands six feet and weighs 170 pounds. He is married and has fifteen children.

This winter Hardy has been having repairs made on his home here, and had a mason from Houlton doing some plastering. This week a sled with several barrels of sand was able to reach within ten feet of the door.

The mason nearly fainted and fell over when Hardy offered to carry in the barrels. Said the mason: "If you can carry one of these barrels, which weighs 500 pounds, as far as that door, I'll do your plastering for nothing." He did.

Hardy promptly kept his word, and so did the Houlton mason.

Asked how he did it, Hardy replied: "Aroostook is famous for its potatoes, but it is also the place to develop real men."

CLEARED OUT WOLVES' DEN

Government hunters in Montana seeking predatory animals have cleared Wolf's Den, a stronghold of the wolf near Highwood, so thoroughly that cattle and calves now graze unmolested where a year or so ago wolves were seen by every stockman every time the spot was passed, according to a report from the field to the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture.

A trip over the divide near Highwood was made recently by a predatory animal inspector who reports that the country has been cleared so effectually of the pests that cattle were found high up in the mountains where they had never been able to go unmolested before.

A thicket of small fir, for years known as the harboring place for wolves, was occupied by cattle at the time the inspection was made. Officials of the stock association reported that they had never before ridden near the thicket without seeing wolves or their tracks, and up to a few months ago cattle approaching the place were doomed.

KILLED BY FUMES IN CLOSED GARAGE

Harry Bliss, expert accountant for the Baker Printing Company of Newark, was suffocated by carbon monoxide gas the other day while running the engine of his automobile in a garage near his home at 76 Hollywood avenue, East Orange. He was found dead three hours after he was seen entering the garage.

According to Dr. William M. Brien, assistant county physician, Bliss's death could have been avoided had he opened the window of the garage a few inches. He went to the small bathroom, at 63 Hollywood avenue, at 6:30 o'clock in the morning. The automobile engine was heard a little while afterward, but in about half an hour it stopped. At 9:30 o'clock H. M. Thompson, a neighbor, who stores his car in the same garage, entered the place and found the body. Bliss apparently had started the engine and tinkered it down and then attempted to remove a tire from a rear wheel. His body was lying so that his feet were directly under the exhaust pipe, through which the poisonous fumes were ejected. Lack of oxygen stalled the engine, it was believed.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

LEAGUE OF NATIONS HAS SMALLEST GOLD COIN

What is believed to be the smallest modern gold coin in the world has just been minted at Geneva. It represents the gold franc on which the budget of the League of Nations is to be calculated.

It is octagonal in form, and on one side are engraved the initials "S. D. N." (Societe des Nations.) Its weight is .03225805 of a gramme, and it is valued at about two cents American money. It is estimated that it would require 13,200 of such coins to make a pound avoirdupois.

WORKS YEARS FOR CHURCH

Jacob, in Biblical days, labored seven years for the hand of Rachel.

George Barrett, a bank clerk in Colusa, Cal., is just completing twenty years of toil in building an Episcopal church for his community.

He obtained the lot from a local philanthropist, collected funds almost single handed, drew the plans, prepared the specifications, obtained the estimates and worked as a laborer on the building in his spare moments.

"You can send along a rector before long, now," Barrett jubilantly told the official of the Episcopal Church the other day in his visit here.

225 TONS OF SLEET TO ACRE

Professor Charles P. Brooks of the meteorological department of Clark University made public Dec. 14, data regarding the recent sleet storm. The precipitation of rain and sleet was 3.77 inches during the three days, he said, representing a weight of 225 tons an acre on the ground.

One pine tree which he measured carried a weight of five tons of ice on one side. A single blade of grass fifteen inches long covered with ice weighed a pound and six ounces. He also figured that every 100 feet of telegraph and telephone wire weighed eighty-seven pounds with its one and two-thirds inches coating of ice.

These figures were considered of interest because of the miles of wire and the thousands of trees and poles that went down under the ice burden.

FARMERS PLAN A DRIVE AGAINST THE COYOTES

Several hundred farmers are making a concerted drive, in which several dozen wolfhounds will be tried.

Nowhere in the Northwest has the wolf breed developed such killers as on the big ranches around Soap Lake, Wash. The toll by wolves and coyotes of lambs, calves and pigs runs up into thousands annually.

But in the trained wolfhound, fearless, fleet and vicious, the doom of the coyotes has been sealed. These courageous dogs can outrun the fleetest prairie wolf and lay its flank or throat open with a single slash of the long deadly muzzle.

M. G. Mathews owns a wolfhound that has already killed a dozen wolves and another practised killer dog has slashed ten coyotes. The coyotes inhabit the foothills of the Wenatchee Mountains and the rough lava beds along the Columbia. In dead of night they sneak out and invade the farms, killing any small animal or fowl they can overpower. Wolves rarely attack near the farm house but take their toll on the ranges.

Game wardens will superintend the coyote drive here in order to keep a record for the Government of the number of animals sighted, killed and other information.

This is the land of big ranches, the Drumheller farm containing 45,000 acres, the Shaw place 32,000 acres, and many from ten to twenty thousand acres.

DAIRY GIRLS WEAR MASCULINE ATTIRE

A large dairy near Seattle, Wash., whose milch cows and other live stocks have been winning capital prizes in the Northwest for years, has made a sensational departure in dairying.

Pretty girls, wearing white duck trousers, are employed to adjust the automatic milking machines, clean and oil the cow's udders and to supervise the feeding and watering of the high-priced bovines.

When questioned as to the difficulty of obtaining girls for such work the manager declared he had received more applications for the jobs than he was apt to need for a year.

The milk maids are well paid, get good meals at the dairy house, have much time for recreation and personal work, do not have dirty or disagreeable work at the barns and are said to actually come to love the sleek, mild-mannered animals they groom.

Milking is done at 7 o'clock in the morning and 6 at evening, about two hours being required each period. After that the milkers work an hour or so cleaning and sterilizing apparatus. And soiled clothing is immediately sent to the dairy laundry.

Regular stable men keep the cow barns as clean as many kitchens and handle all heavy work. The maids simply attend to the milking and its adjuncts.

The idea developed because it was impossible to keep men for the laborious part of dairying and require them to shave, bathe, change clothing and shoes when milking time arrived.

The milk girls take much interest in dolling up the prize cows and urging them to the utmost in producing rich milk in large measure. It is said cows respond quickly to kindness and good treatment by an increasing flow. Good grooming is essential as good food.

Certified milk, butter, eggs, fruit and produce from this dairy bring top prices in Puget Sound cities. The big hotels, restaurants and dining cars carry its products.

MILE-A-MINUTE Car

When a high school boy can take a few parts of a demolished motor-cycle and in a short time construct a real automobile that will travel 60 miles an hour, and run from 30 to 40 miles on a gallon of gasoline, it looks as though De Palma, Tommy Milton, Resta and all the other speed kings will be back numbers when some of the youngsters grow up.

Harry Habig of Cincinnati is a young fellow who spent his spare time in working over the parts of a motorcycle, and his product, the "Habig Special," is a wonder of mechanical skill. He doesn't need to worry about freezing up in the winter, for the engine is air cooled. The machine weighs less than 500. pounds, and it's no trick for Harry to change one of his standard motorcycle wheels before the average chauffeur gets his tools out. Young Habig certainly started something in town, and the most desired graduation, birthday and Christmas present for the current year is a second-hand motorcycle.

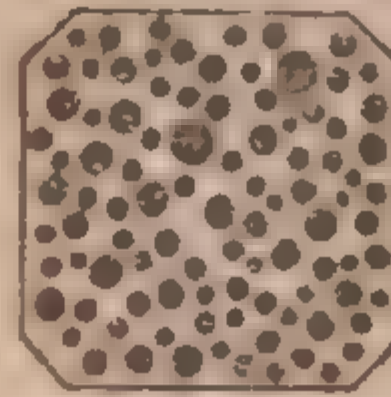
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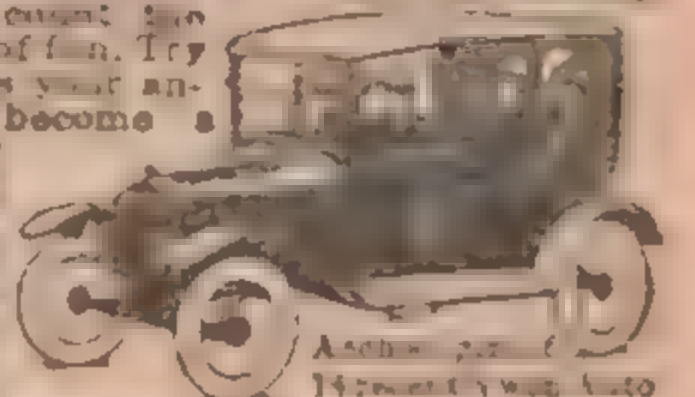
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He thought he could throw me—



Dear Tom: You know how Ted Brown has always been saying he could throw me with one hand tied behind him. If he wanted to, and you know how he's always bullying the kids smaller'n he is. Well yesterday, he and I had it out. Gee, I wish you'd been there. You know how much bigger Ted is than I. Well, right off the bat he grabbed hold of me and pretty nearly busted me in half. He thought he had me licked dead easy—

but—

but I wriggled around and got a hold on him that I'd learned from the Farmer Burns School of Wrestling. The next second—KERFLOP, and I had Mister Ted Brown on the ground, tied up so he couldn't move and yelling for me to quit. Gee, Tom, wrestling has it all over boxing for defending yourself. Why it's a cinch to handle a fellow half as big again as you are if you know the secret holds. If I were you I'd write to Farmer Burns. See you next week. So long—FRED.

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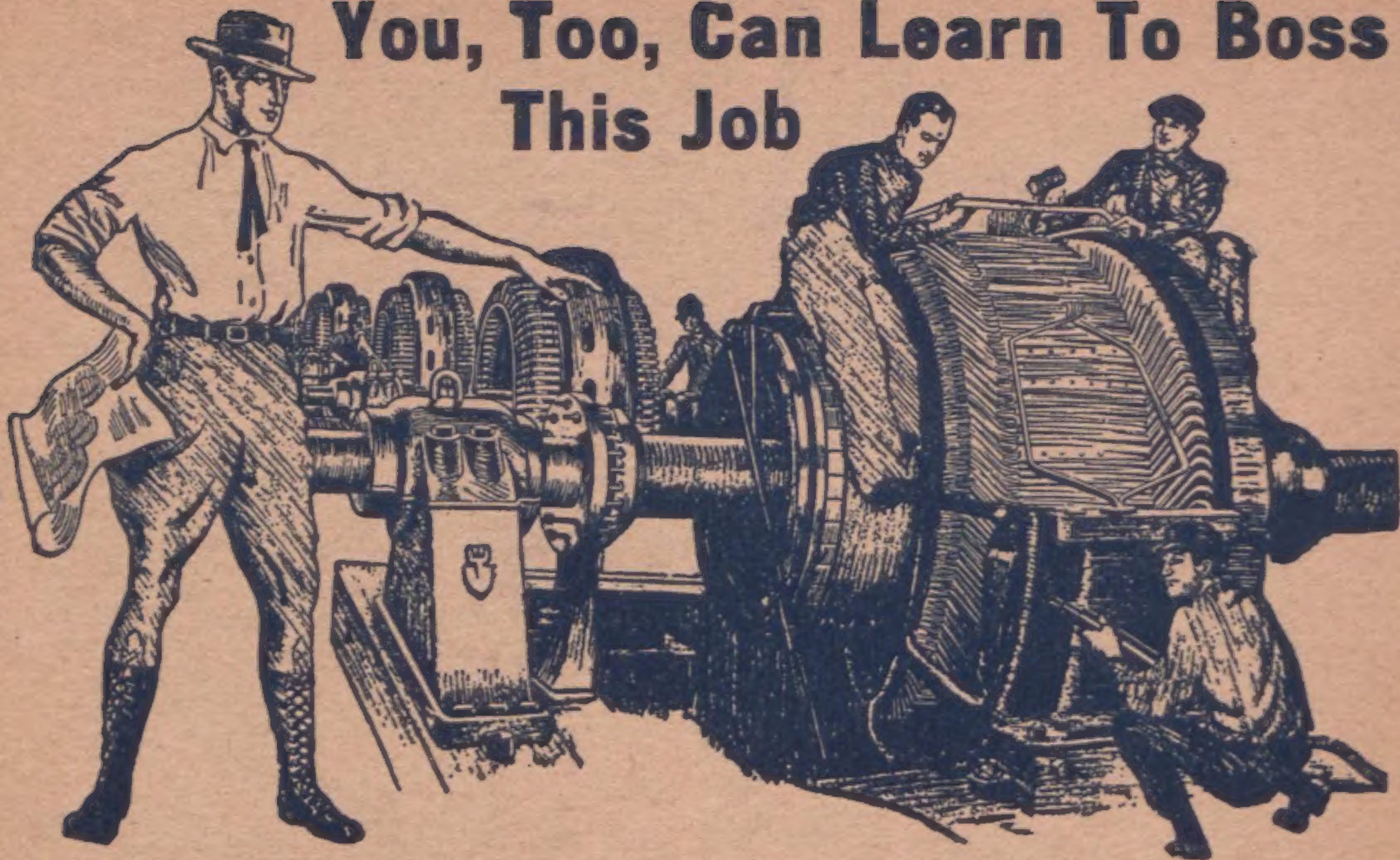
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